











# DRAWN FROM LIFE.

BY

ARCHIBALD FORBES,

SPECIAL MILITARY CORRESPONDENT OF THE DAILY NEWS.

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### CHAPTER I.

TOWARD noon the sorely-wearied little army reached the village of Maharajpore, and a halt was sounded. The volunteer cavalry went forward to reconnoitre, and sent in two spies, the gist of whose report, it was buzzed through the camp, was to the effect that the Nana was posted in great force, and protected by entrenchment, across the Grand Trunk Road, near the point where the byway to Cawnpore branched off. It was clear there was more fighting at hand, and soon it became known that the



fighting was to come that afternoon. Officers were sent for to the presence of the General, and for an hour or more Havelock was to be seen on the summit of a little sandy elevation, upon which he had scratched with his sword-point something that seemed a mathematical problem, lecturing with much emphasis and fluency to his assembled subordinates. In the meantime the troops were trying to get a meal. But the majority of them, through utter fatigue, had come to loathe the very sight of butcher's meat, particularly meat to be eaten within an hour after it had been alive, and most were content to munch a bit of biscuit, while they thirsted most vehemently for porter.

Porter turned up, like manna in the desert. Some of the Madras Fusiliers, sauntering about the Grand Trunk Road, chanced upon a number of casks which had been

hastily abandoned, and turned off the road into the swamp which it bounded. In a moment they were round the casks like pilgrims around a well in the desert. The porter was drunk out of anything that came handiest; ends of casks were knocked in, and men almost plunged in bodily in their eagerness for the draught. Mouths were clapped to hungholes, nay, casks were broached, and fellows in their frenzied thirst lay down and drank of the porter-puddles formed on the ground. Captain M'Bain, the commissary-general, came tearing up, and made an effort to claim the drink for the benefit of the commissary. He was, indeed, partly successful, but not without much trouble. The "Lambs" had got the drink into their heads, and actually swore in the teeth of the officer when he strove to drive them off their prize; nor was it, in-

deed, till satiety had taken the place of craving that the last Fusilier yielded up his claim to the flotsam and jetsam of the swamp. The "find" was, however, large enough to go round the whole of the rest of the force in moderation, and an immense deal of good it did; but when the order to fall in was given it was found that the majority of the Fusiliers were as drunk as lords. The unwonted indulgence in porter had operated quickly upon them, many of them not having tasted food for forty-eight hours, and it was found an equally difficult thing to dress and to close up the staggering ranks. But if their heads and heels were momentarily a little light, their hearts were in the right place after all. There might have been a good deal of porter in their vehement cheering; there was plenty of genuine fight there, too, as they marched off up the road, un-

steady, yet pluckily. The cavalry had gone on in front, and immediately behind the Fusiliers, with the guns at intervals, came the Highlanders, followed by the 64th and 84th. On the road, in columns of subdivisions, the whole steadily tramped, till they were close upon the point where the Cawnpore Road leaves the Grand Trunk. All at once the Fusiliers scatter to the right in skirmishing order, while the cavalry hold straight on, and presently the music of the enemy's batteries is heard as they open fire down the road. Hamilton gives the word "Subdivisions, right wheel!" and away go the Highlanders, with the other regiments behind them, in a direction toward their right front. Everybody saw the game now. Approving comments on Havelock's generalship ran through the ranks of the Highlanders.

“Gin the carle can preach, guid faith he kens hoo tae fecht as weel,” said old Macnab, of the Grenadiers, who was supposed to be a prodigy of strategetical skill.

“We’re kyauvin roun’ the neuk on them gey an’ canny,” remarked douce Peter M’Combie from Donside, who, like most of those from his part, had an intense appreciation of canniness.

The truth was, a flank movement was being executed, and that, too, with unlooked for success. The Nana’s front was down the Trunk Road, and at that moment his artillery were playing on the feinting cavalry advancing up it, as if the van of a direct attack. But behind a friendly screen of mango topes the British infantry had diverged, and were steadily marching to the right in the direction of the high ground between the road and the river.

Nearly a mile had already been traversed, and Colonel Hamilton was rising in his stirrups, looking back to see whether the Sikhs had yet entered on the divergence. Suddenly crash through a gap in the trees came a round shot, followed by another, and yet another. Through the gap the mutineers had seen the flank movement, and they hurriedly tried to check it with what artillery could be brought to bear on the advance. It was useless. Steadily and firmly, as if marching past on the parade ground, did the Highlanders emerge upon the open, as they cleared the sheltering flank of the mango trees, amidst a grim stillness, broken only by the crash of the bursting shells, and the oaths of the bullock drivers, as the guns rattled onward to open fire on the flank. Old Hamilton's eyes began to sparkle, and his face to flush, as just

at the right moment he shouted "Ross-shire Buffs, wheel into line!" and then "Forward!" The enemy were making frantic efforts to change front, so as to be prepared to receive them. Already three of the Sepoy guns were round into position and, unsilenced by the fire of Maude's lighter pieces, were sending round shot and shells crashing through the ranks. "Forward!" was still the word; and now it is clear the enemy are making ready to stand an attack at close quarters. With silent, grim imperturbability, the Highland line stalks on steadily, at the long springing step only to be learnt on the heather. Now they are within eighty yards of the muzzles of the guns, and they can see the colour of the moustaches of the men plying and supporting them. Then old Watty, with his sword in the air, and his face all ablaze with the

fighting blood in him, turns round in his saddle, shouts "Charge !" and bids the pipers strike up. Wild and shrill burst forth over that Indian plain the notes of the northern music. But louder yet, drowning them and the roll of the artillery, rang out that Highland war-cry which has so often presaged victory to British arms. As if stirred by one impulse, every man dashed forward, cheering as he ran. They were on and over the guns ere the gunners had time to drop their lintstocks and ramming rods; they were down upon the supports with their bayonets at the charge, and the supports went down where they stood, for want of the opportunity to break and run away in time. Mad with the ardour of battle, every drop of Highland blood on fire in every vein, the Ross-shire men crashed right through the village and cleared it before



they dropped out of the "double." But there was more work in front of them. In the centre of the enemy's position stood a howitzer, from between which and the British flank advance the enemy, beaten out by the Highlanders, had scattered, and which was therefore free now to do its worst. Being splendidly served, it was very mischievous, and besides standing as it did on the Trunk Road, it formed the key to the position. Havelock dashed up to the front of the Highlanders, who were re-forming behind a causeway leading up to a little bridge, and waving his sword, shouted, "Now, Highlanders! another charge like the last wins the day!" Havelock had not to complain of the absence of an answering cheer that day. Impatiently, restrained by their officers till they had taken up some kind of formation, they burst out from be-

hind the causeway as a Highland stream comes tearing down a glen, and swept everything before them with resistless force. The howitzer was taken, the position was carried, the village beyond was taken, and the breathless men unwillingly paused on the further side of it, in obedience to the sound of the bugle. When they came to count heads, they found that hot work such as this had cost them not a few lives. Among others, stout Quartermaster-sergeant Tulloch was gone, struck down by sunstroke in the first charge. Poor fellow! he was too brave to stop behind, and too fat for a charge. He charged, and died.

The enemy, chased out of the village, were falling back along the Grand Trunk Road, to find a rallying point in some village further on. Their rear was guarded by a strong body of cavalry, which appeared inclined to

present a determined front to any pursuit. Hector and Sullivan were close to each other in the ranks, and the former suddenly gripped his comrade's arm, and in a low, earnest voice, asked—

“Mick, d'ye see that officer in command of the rear squadron of the Pandy Cavalry?”

“Him, d'ye mane, that's in an' out like a dog in a fair, thryin' to knock some ardher into the blackguards?”

“That's the fellow, Mick. Now tell me who is he?”

Mick looked long and intently, and then burst out—“By the living jingo, it's that tundhering scoundrel Fitzloom!”

“Right, Sullivan, and I must get at him somehow.”

“Wid all my heart, chum, but it's aisier said than done—just now, at any rate. Ye must be aisy, and thrust to luck.”

Just then up came the handful of volunteer cavalry, eager for a chance. There were but eighteen of them, all told, and the General shook his head when Captain Barrow pleaded hard for permission to charge. But Beatson, the adjutant-general, who, struck down with cholera, and unable to sit his horse, was up to the front here in a tumbril, saw a chance for them after the General had gone off to the left, and he took it upon himself to order them to charge. The flank of the Grenadier company of the Highlanders, where Hector was, was close to Beatson's tumbril, behind which his horse was led, and a sudden thought struck Hector. Stepping out of the ranks, he told the adjutant-general that he had been a dragoon, and, seeing there was a spare horse, he should be glad to ride it in the charge the volunteer cavalry were just about to make.

“Up with you, my man,” sung out Beatson. “Here’s my sword for you; and I don’t want it back clean, remember!”

Hector was in the saddle in a second, making the nineteenth man under Barrow’s command; and a motley group they looked, for, although most were fairly mounted, in the matter of uniform there was not much uniformity to boast of. As he formed up on the flank, he heard honest Mick’s cheery voice: “Now, Heckthor, my dear lad, kape yer swoord-hand up and yer bridle-hand down, and remimber ye reprisint the honnor and glory of the ould Sthrawboots!” Barrow took the cigar out of his mouth, threw it away, gathered up his reins, and with a roar of “Charge!” that might have served as the word of command for a brigade, rammed his spurs into his horse’s ribs, and dashed away at score. In the little band

that followed him, cheering as they galloped, dressing was not very closely attended to, but there was plenty of pluck. Hard on the captain's flank rode Hector Macdonald, a red spot on each cheek, his teeth set hard, his eye never swerving from one man in that seething mass they were riding into. "Give point, lads; damn cuts and guards!" roared Barrow, as he skewered a havildar who tried to stop his course, and then burst into the thick of them. Hector was hard behind him, standing up in the stirrups so as not to lose sight of his own especial mark, and the remainder came on in a clump. Young Macdonald had but one aim, the white-faced man with the black moustache, who had shirked off out of the *mêlée* when he saw it was to be close quarters; and looking neither to the right nor to the left, with his bridle-hand well down, and Beatson's sword

hard at work, he cut his way at length within arm's length of the other.

"Now, traitor, dog!" hissed from between the lad's clenched teeth, "now, liar and perjurer! if you are not a coward as well, stand up to me and fight for life!"

Fitzloom's reply was a fearful scowl, and a bullet from a revolver, which just grazed Hector's bare head. Lifting his horse with his bridle hand, and giving the flanks a blow with his spurless heels, the Scottish lad at the same time sent his sword point straight at Fitzloom's throat. The thrust would have gone through him like cardboard, but the sword point struck on some concealed gorget, and shivered to pieces, leaving but the hilt in Hector's hand. The recreant Englishman smiled a baleful smile as he brought his weapon up from the useless guard to point, and Hector seemed completely in his

power. But not so ; with a stern shout he pulled his horse up till it nearly came over on him, striking it as it reared with his broken sword. The maddened brute bounded forward, catching as it sprang the point of Fitzloom's sword in its chest, and Hector on the instant stooping forward fastened a terrible grip on Fitzloom's throat. The impetus hurled both to the ground ; and now, down among the horses' feet, with the mass swaying and churning around them, this deadly fight was renewed. Fitzloom struggled like a madman—he bit, he kicked, and fought with an energy which seemed superhuman ; but the grip of the other never left his throat. Like a bulldog Hector held on with his right hand, groping about meanwhile with his left for some weapon wherewith to finish the contest. At length his grasp closed on the



sword which Fitzloom had just dropped—and then it was all over with the son of the cotton lord. As Hector dragged out the weapon to send it home again, the doomed man's face writhed with an expression of fiendish triumph, and from his lips broke the words, "Mary—Mary Home!" Hector stayed his hand and listened for more, but these were Fitzloom's last words. The blood started from his lips, he gave one convulsive struggle, and the only English officer for whom, through all this struggle, his country had cause to blush, was dead. Bruised, mauled, and sore, covered with blood which he knew not whether it was his or not, Hector rose from the ground and straightened himself up. The cavalry, reduced now to a dozen, were halted a little in advance, and the Highlanders were rapidly advancing to where Hector stood, cheer-

ing loudly as they came up at the gallantry of the handful of horsemen. And Havelock was there too with his pithy, "Well done, gentlemen volunteers, I'm proud to command you." But here was Beatson in his tumbril, and Hector with neither horse nor sword to restore to him. The horse was accounted for, it is true, by his carcase, which lay near to where Hector stood. And the lad, dazed yet, and not knowing whether he was quite sound or whether he had received a dozen mortal wounds, contrived to find the hilt of the adjutant-general's sword, while he still held his adversary's grasped in his left hand. Beatson took the loss very philosophically, for he knew how to discount the value of the horse; and as Hector gave him Fitzloom's sword, he complimented the young corporal in very flattering language. The Grenadiers, as

Hector came back to his place, gave him a lusty cheer, led off by Lieutenant Campbell in person ; and old Hamilton himself gave an approving smile as he quietly said, "Well done, my lad !" Next day Hector was read out sergeant. As for Sullivan, having first satisfied himself that his chum was not "kilt intirely," he indulged in a profusion of hyperbolically laudatory language, and only gave up piling it on—half in chaff, half in earnest—when Hector told him what it was he had really done. Mick wanted then and there to go and make a report of the circumstance ; but Hector stopped him. Far better let the matter remain a secret, was his idea. It would be awfully disgraceful to have it reported in the papers that there was a man who once held the Queen's commission, turned traitor and serving with the Nana ; so Hector sacrificed himself to save

the credit of his country—an achievement which, perhaps, was more creditable to him than the other.

But his fighting was not yet over for the day. The Pandies seemed always, indeed, to be beaten, but always likewise to recover and rally with surprising determination. They were in strong force in another village, and there was nothing for it but to dislodge them.

Havelock understood the art of keeping weary men in fighting humour perhaps as well as any general that ever gave the word of command. The fire from the village was pelting along the front, when out he rode into the thick of it and cheerily cried, as if the whole affair were a game at foot-ball, “Come, which is to take that village—the Highlanders or the 64th?” Of course both corps tried to take it, and, the spirit of

emulation strong between them, they came tearing through the village at the double, not giving many of its defenders the chance of escaping alive. The ground beyond the village was somewhat broken, and all at once the advance, still pressing forward, came plump upon a phenomenon. There was a strong array of mutineers, infantry and cavalry, with a big gun and two smaller ones in position on the road, and the supports arranged in the form of a half-moon, with the horns curving ominously forward and almost overlapping the village. As the men of the 78th and 64th, staggered by the withering fire which came tearing down the road in their teeth, halted in their onward course, they heard the band playing and the buglers striking up, and a great amazement fell upon them. One thing was clear—breathless and disorganized as they were,

and with the artillery in the rear, an immediate advance was madness, and the officers hastily gave the word to lie down. The artillery was far behind, and a long while in coming up. It is an awkward thing for soldiers to lie thus supinely listening to the round shot whizzing above them. The men began to get restless, and some of the grumblers expressed themselves pretty freely that enough had been done for the day. They were fresh troops that were in front of them, under the Nana himself, who was perpetually saluted by bursts of regimental music as he moved from place to place. The mutineer cavalry were gradually closing in on the flanks, and the infantry had begun to push forward in front. Still no artillery came, and a growing revulsion from the previous excitement of victory which had animated the British regiments was percep-

tible. It was rapidly getting dark, too. The chances of victory were still trembling in the balance ; there was but one way to decide the matter—and that Havelock took. Coming up to the front at a canter, mounted upon a tat, his charger having been shot under him, he pulled up quietly in the midst of the pelting fire, and gave the order, “The line will advance.” Young Pearson, his field-bugler (one of the 78th lads), sounded out lustily, the line sprang up like one man, and pressed steadily on. The 64th were on the road straight in the course of the fire from the big gun, while the Highlanders were a little to the right rear. It was warm work with the former. Sterling dismounted, for his little nag would not stand fire ; and young Havelock, being mounted, occupied the more commanding position in front of the regiment, which was

a little inclined afterwards to grumble at him for officiousness. Officious or not, he did no harm, and the regiment steadily pressed on behind him, with the big gun in front showering grape into it at point-blank range. Nearly fifty went down before that terrible fire; but at length the 64th got within charging distance, and then they went to work at the double, and soon were on the top of the ugly monster that had done them so much injury. The 78th were close up, with Havelock himself in their front, but the darkness was falling so fast, that they were afraid to use their muskets as they advanced, for fear of injuring friend as well as foe. Indeed, in one instance the General himself made a narrow escape from encountering a volley as, having ridden out to the front some distance, he and his staff came galloping back to call the Highlanders



forward. The guns at last came up, and opened fire on the routed mutineers.

The battle was over, and the men were fairly done. They dropped where they stood in sections, and went to sleep on the bare ground, without thinking either of food or tents. Among those who remained awake, there was none of the elation of victory; for through the ranks, about midnight, there throbbed the bruit, originating none knew where, that the women and children in Cawnpore had been butchered in cold blood while the battle was raging in the evening. Poor Hector lay awake looking up at the stars, and trying to banish the fearful thought that kept intruding itself into his mind. The Homes, he knew, were up the country, somewhere—what if they had been in Cawnpore? What meant that devilish smile on the dying Fitzloom's face, and the last words upon his lips?

The poor lad's mind was terribly tossed about, and in this matter he had no confidant. He had never told Mick Sullivan about Mary Home, and even if he had, Mick was snoring like a pig, too sleepy even to do his usual catering. There was no cure for Hector but patience—yet patience was very hard to find, and he wished, more than once, that a stray bullet, or Fitzloom's sword, had put him out of his trouble.

The officers of the Highlanders were as tired as their men, but Havelock would not let them rest till he had sent for them, and told them that if he got the command of a regiment, he would petition that the regiment should be the 78th—a compliment which the officers tried unavailingly on their return to communicate to their men. Towards midnight there was a sudden alarm. Fagged out as the men were, they mechanically struggled to their feet, and fell into their

places with the silence of habit—half of them not fairly awake. But it was a false alarm—it was not the enemy; it was something far better, it was the grog. The commissary at once made an issue of it, and right welcome it was to men who had eaten no solid food for four-and-twenty hours, and had not wetted their lips for twelve. Comforted in a measure, they resumed their bivouac, and silence once more reigned over the little force—little originally, it was much less now. The casualties during the four days had, among the Europeans especially, been very heavy. A large detachment had been left behind at Maharajpore, in charge of the baggage. The 84th and part of the Fusiliers were far in the rear, guarding the captured guns; and in all there were not 800 men in the force which lay upon the corner of the plain of Cawnpore.

## CHAPTER II.

WHEN reveillé sounded on the morning of the 17th of July, the Highlanders sprang to their feet, and looked around them to discover where they were, for darkness had closed in upon them before they had halted on the previous night. They found themselves on the broad plain on which stand the cantonment and the town of Lucknow. In front of them were the long lines which had belonged to the revolted native troops, and the roofless artillery barracks. On their left lay the White House, which had been the head-quarters of the Nana, and near to it the Savada House

raised its square form. The General had sent forward a reconnoitring party to discover whether the report was really true that had come in during the night, to the effect that the Nana and his forces had evacuated the town and the cantonments. While waiting the return of this expedition, previous to a general advance, the Highlanders took the opportunity of making themselves acquainted with the interior of the Nana's lair. It was just as he had left it on the previous evening—the rooms littered with arms and papers, and on a table under the verandah a service of coffee-cups, which had probably contained the last refreshment swallowed by the Nana before he took the road for Bithoor. Down in the bottom of the garden, among the shrubs, Hector and Sullivan came upon the tent which had been the Maharajah's sanctum sanctorum,

and over against it the pavilion wherein, judging by the costly shawls and other relics, had dwelt the ladies of his harem. The men, wandering around the spot, chiefly on the outlook for drink and loot, came suddenly upon the corpse of an English girl. She lay among the shrubs at the back of the White House, and to all appearance had been thrown from one of the windows ; but it had assuredly not been the fall that had caused the death of the fair-haired young girl. With curses hissing out from between their clenched teeth, the rough soldiery tenderly straitened the girl's limbs, and having excavated a shallow grave among the loose earth of the garden, placed therein the body of their hapless countrywoman. Old Macnab, of the Grenadier company, was standing by the gravehead, a tear in his eye (he had bairns of his own), and

groping about in his Scriptural lore for an appropriate text or two ; while the others stood around with frowning brows and clenched fists, far readier to curse than to follow the old Kintail man in his somewhat mangled quotations from the Bible, when a sudden and deafening report crashed upon their ears. The ground trembled as if shaken by an earthquake, and looking westward, the men saw a huge cloud of white smoke rising in the air. They hurried back to the bivouac, where the order had just been issued for all to get under arms. Presently Tytler galloped in on his return from the reconnaissance, and soon after came the two companies of the 84th, who had accompanied him. It became known then that the rebels had entirely evacuated the town and its environs. The loud concussion just heard had been the explosion of the great

arsenal magazine at the western extremity of the cantonment, which a party of rebel cavalry had been left behind to blow up. A thrill went through the ranks as it became known that beyond a doubt the story of the spies was true, and that the British captive women had been butchered on the previous night.

After breakfast the troops fell in, and advanced through the cantonments to the vicinity of the town. There was a large tank situated somewhat to the eastward of the Assembly Rooms, and here the 78th pitched their tents. The other regiments, whose tents had not yet come up, were quartered temporarily in the deserted huts of the native lines. Before, however, the regiments broke, the General formed them into a square, and gave them one of his speeches. To the Highlanders he was espe-



cially complimentary. Right hard did he try for a cheer. Several times did he halt in his discourse, as if to give them the cue, but the Scots were not in the cheering humour. But the 64th recompensed him for what he, no doubt, thought the surly silence of the dour Highlanders. Havelock was indeed a curious mixture of sincerity and buncomb. Stiff and stern in ordinary—so much so, that his common nickname in the ranks was the “Galvanized Ramrod”—he had a single weakness, and that was for airing his oratorical powers. A favourite figure of speech of his was that trope about “the colour of your enemy’s moustache,” and he gave the 64th the benefit of it on this occasion. “Your fire,” said he, “was reserved till you saw the colour of your enemy’s moustache—and this gave us the victory.” Whereat the 64th cheered most lustily,

causing Havelock's face to beam with pleasure. Old Macnab had his dry comment on the scene. "Troth, an' he had joost tellt us it was our charge that gaint the victory. I wunner hoo mony victories he maks oot hae been won? Hearken tae him noo, he's telling the Blue Caps that it was their marksmanship wan the victory. Hech, sirs, the world's made o' flummery."

After the 78th had taken possession of their tents, had set the guard, and made the usual camp dispositions, the men, as is customary in such cases, began to dodge away out of bounds. They had no right to do so—the offence was something like breaking out of barracks at home; but the rigour of discipline cannot be maintained with mathematical precision in such circumstances as Havelock's force now was placed. Some made off into the town, bent on plunder and

drink ; others went out to find some relics of the obstinate defence of their countrymen, and of the terrible slaughter of their countrywomen. Sergeant Macdonald, his chum Mick Sullivan, and the big piper of the Grenadiers, by name Jock Gibson, formed a party for this purpose. Gibson was a character. A rough, uncouth soldier he was on the surface—a swearing, blustering, reckless fellow as ever wore uniform. But he had an underlying stratum of susceptibility. The man's heart was as soft as a turnip to a pathetic story or a plaintive melody. He would weep like a child when he heard Allan Stuart, the corporal with the rich voice, sing "Bonnie Annie Laurie," and he was enthusiastic on the musical capacities of his pipes. These, indeed, he seldom laid aside. Meet Jock Gibson when you would, be sure the bladder of the bag-

pipes was under his arm, and whenever he had a quiet moment he would strike up some wailing pibroch for his own private gratification, and not unfrequently to the disgust of those who happened to be within hearing and were anxious to go to sleep. The three strolled down the road past the Assembly Rooms and the theatre. The place seemed almost entirely deserted. Here and there, indeed, a swarthy face glowered at them from round a corner, or out of the upper window of some house; but the bulk of the inhabitants appeared to have taken flight along with the Nana. At length they reached the entrance of a compound, about which flitted weirdly one or two shrinking, cowering natives. These huddled together in a little posse as the three 78th men came in sight, anxious seemingly to attract their attention to something, but terrified to

approach and speak unreservedly. Pointing their skinny, swarthy arms at the entrance to the little bungalow, the natives, in that loud whisper which reaches sometimes as far as a shout, kept uttering the word "Sahib!" "Sahib!" and beckoning timidly as if they wished, yet half dreaded, that the three soldiers would turn aside, and enter the compound. The ordinary mud wall, here and there crumbled nearly level, surrounded the compound, in which the rank grass was growing luxuriantly. But there was a beaten path up to the entrance to a little flat-roofed bungalow, which stood about the centre of the right-hand face of the compound enclosure. Hector, as he entered the compound, looked back, and saw the whispering group of awe-stricken natives gazing on them with pallid faces as, Jock Gibson leading, they strode on toward

the entrance to the bungalow. Unsuspiciously Gibson passed the threshold and entered one of the rooms. Next moment he rushed out, his face ghastly, while his hands worked convulsively, and his whole appearance, as he strove in vain to gasp forth some articulate sound, indicated that he had seen some frightful sight. Without waiting for him to explain himself, Hector rushed forward, followed by the others. A fearful sight met their shocked gaze. A deadly silence reigned—there was no living thing in all the place. But the cocoa-nut matting with which the floor was laid oozed spongily under their tread, saturated as it was with blood. Wherever there was a little depression in its surface, there stood a little pool of dark blood, soaking gradually downward through the matting. Floating on the clotted

surface of these pools, and scattered at random over the floor, were very pitiful relics. There were broken combs, such as women wear in their back-hair, and the frills of children's dresses, and torn, blood-dabbled cuffs, and infants' pinafores, and little round hats, and fragments of paper. One of these Hector stooped and picked up. It was a bit of cardboard, wet outside with blood. But the inside was clean, and on it was sewn a bonnie flaxen curl, just as it had been cut from some infant's head. Below the curl was the writing, "Ned's hair—with love." The room was panelled upwards from the floor to the height of about three feet, and the 78th men, looking around for slaughter-tokens, noticed in the panelling many a bullet hole, and many a sword-hack, but not one at a height which might indicate that men had been standing up to men in fair

fight. The tell-tale marks were all low down on the panelling, as if the firers of the shots, and the wielders of the swords, had been shooting and slashing at wretches crouching on the floor—begging on their knees, mayhap, for the mercy which they did not receive. Long and silently, with knit brows and grimly-set faces, did the three soldiers gaze upon this scene eloquent of a fearful tragedy. But where were the victims of the pitiless slaughter? As they turned away without speech, but actuated by a common, silent impulse to make the ghastly search, they noticed that the handles of the doors were festooned with torn strips of female apparel, which had apparently been used, but uselessly, to stay the entrance of the butchers. As Macdonald and his comrades stepped out, shuddering to see the red imprint which their footsteps left on



the pavement, they noticed for the first time that the pillars of the verandah were smeared with blood, as if gory bodies had rubbed against them as they were dragged forth. The trail was not hard to find. Broad and well defined, blazoned with its tell-tale stains, it led across the courtyard of the compound. As they followed it Hector picked up a little boot, which might have belonged to a child some two or three years old. The blood surged up into his pallid face when he found that a babe's foot was inside the little boot. A few steps more, and they were at the brink of a well near the upper corner of the compound, on its side opposite the bungalow. Looking over the edge of this well, they found it full nearly to the lip—full of the hacked and battered dead bodies of British ladies and British children, the limbs interlaced and tangled in a strange

ghastly confusion. Sullivan was the first to break down. The Irish heart is like an aspen leaf in the wind. He sat down on the blood-stained edge of that ghastly pit, and lifted up his voice and wept aloud. Hector's manhood yielded, and the hearts of these men, whose trade was blood, and who had seen without the quiver of a muscle their comrades dropping by their side, became as water within them. Big Jock Gibson sunk down on the ground, sobbing as he had never done since the day his mother said good-bye to him, and gave him her Gaelic blessing in the market-place of Tain. As he wept, his fingers were fumbling as if mechanically for the mouthpiece of his faithful bagpipes. At length he found it, and in an absent, routine way, slipped it into his mouth. As the wind whistles through the bare boughs of the trees in

winter, so came, in fitful soughs, the first straggling notes from out weeping Jock's drone and chanter. At length he mastered his convulsive sobbing—or, rather, it might have been, he transferred his emotion from his heart into his pipes—and he poured forth a wild dirge—a pibroch and coronach in one. It acted like a charm on the natives, who, dodging behind the earthen walls of the compound, had been peering in terror at the doings of the "Sahibs." They stood erect, and listened; at length some of them ventured to mount on the walls, and stand there listening to the strains of Jock's pipes. Hector seized one of the foremost—a signal for the others to rush away in terror. He dragged the terrified wretch to the edge of the well, and sternly asked him what he knew of the circumstances. The trembling native protested that he had been in another

part of the town on the evening of the slaughter, and that all he had seen was the work of the following morning. "I saw," said he, "the bodies dragged out, most of them by the hair of the head. They were stripped after they were brought out. Some of the women were alive—I cannot say how many. Three could speak. The dead were thrown into the well first. A great crowd stood looking or standing on the compound walls—Sepoys, city people, and villagers. Three boys ran out alive. They were caught and thrown into the well without being killed."

"For the love of God, Heckthor, stop him. I'll kill him if he says another word," shouted Sullivan, as he sprang to his feet, his fists clenched, and the veins starting on his forehead like knotted cordage. The terrified native broke from Hector's loosened grasp,

and was out of sight in an instant. Hector and Sullivan turned to go ; but they could by no means arouse big Jock Gibson. He sat there on the ground like one in a trance, his whole soul concentrated in the wild wailings of his pipes; so they left him where he sat. But as they entered the bungalow for one last look at its ghastliness, that the sight might not fade away out of their memory so long as strength was left in their arms for vengeance, Sullivan saw, glittering in a cavity in the matting, a ring, and he picked it up. It was a simple bauble, with two locks of diverse coloured hair plaited in a small scutcheon. But Sullivan was struck with surprise at the conduct of his comrade. As Hector looked over Mick's shoulder at this little find, he suddenly clutched with one hand the Irishman's shoulder in a grasp of iron, while with the other he snatched

the ring from him, and then rushed out into the open air. Sullivan followed in amazement, only to find Hector leaning against a pillar of the verandah—his face buried in his hands and his whole frame shaken by convulsive emotion. Mick conjectured that there was some tragic story attached to the ring which he had found, thus to excite Hector; but with a certain innate delicacy he refrained from putting any questions, nor, indeed, did he interpose in any way, till the violence of Hector's feelings had in some degree spent itself. Then, slipping his arm through that of his comrade—

“Come along out av this, Heckthor, me son,” said honest Mick, “sure the soight av it's enough to dhrive a man aff his head. Come up to the tint, lad, an' have a lie down—a slape'll do ye a power av good.”

But when Hector was alone in the empty

tent there was no sleep for him. He pulled out the fatal ring again, and gazed upon it with the forlorn hope that he might have been mistaken after all. But no—there was, and there could be, no mistake. He had seen it too often on Mary Home's finger to be deceived in it now. There were the two plaited locks of hair—the black hair of David Home, while as yet the snows of age and sorrow had not fallen upon his head—and interlaced with it the golden curl which Mary had many a time told him was a token from her dead mother to her living father in the days of her courtship. Lest Hector might have persuaded himself that he was wrong, the confirmation—strong as holy writ—existed on the back of the scutcheon. There, entwined together with many a vagary of the engraving tool, were the initials “D. H.” and “M. D.,” Donaldson

having been the maiden name of Mr. Home's wife. Ever since he had seen that portrait in the Calcutta photographer's window, a foreboding he could not shake off had entered Hector's mind ; but now the foreboding was gone, to be replaced by the terrible certainty and by utter despair. As the lad lay in the tent, with his hands upon his face, and his face in the dust, the old times came up before him with a poignant distinctness. He saw the honoured, white head of Mr. Home, as the good minister was wont to sit at his study window looking upon the churchyard. Mary, his own Mary, stood before him once more, with her merry black eye sparkling, her black hair flashing again in the northern sun—her whole form eloquent of life and grace. And then—then the bitter horrors of the siege—for Hector knew of Wheeler's defence—then, mayhap, on the



capitulation and slaughter, the rude grasp of the demon Sepoy—oh ! horror ! Hector's form quivered with a spasm of anguish as he lay. And now, but a few hours ago, while they had been fighting and straining every nerve in the hope of rescue, the work of butchery had been going on in that fearful room, the picture of which was graven on his mind for ever—the cowering terror, the shrieks for mercy, the fiends at their ruthless work on that terrible evening. And then the morning, when the bodies were dragged forth and cast into that fearful pit—the tragedy in all its details blazed, as it were, before his eyes as he lay there groveling in the dust. And, O God ! was Mary one of the women who could speak when the place was emptied in the morning? Had she been plunged, still breathing, living, able to speak, into that horrible living tomb?

The agony of that hour of bitterness was, indeed, very sore.

Meanwhile, to his comrades assembled in a little tope in front of the tents, Sullivan was trying, in words often broken by tears, to tell the story of what he had seen. But he was interrupted by big Jock Gibson, who stalked into the midst of the circle, his face white and drawn, his pipe under his arm.

“Cumrades,” began Jock, in a strange broken voice, “I hae seen a sicht that has curdlit my bluid. The soles o’ my feet are wat wi’ the gore o’ women and bairns; I saw their corpses whummled ane abune anither, strippit and gashed, till the wall was fu’ near hand tae its mou’. Men, I canna speak mair o’ that fearfu’ sicht; but I hae broucht awa a keepsake o’t that I fand.”

And Jock pulled from out his breast a long, heavy tress of golden hair, cut clean

and straight, as if by a sword-cut which had missed the head it grew on. As he held it out, it hung limp and straight in a sunbeam which straggled down upon it through the leaves of the mango trees.

Old Macnab, the Kintail man, the patriarch of the regiment, stepped out, and took his bonnet off reverently.

“Gie me that, Jock Gibson.”

Jock handed Macnab the relic from the scene of the slaughter.

“Stan’ roun’ me, men!” said Macnab.

The Highlanders crowded around him, amazed at the solemnity of his tone.

He parted out the tress into as many locks as there were claimants, reserving a lock for himself, which he tenderly coiled up and, opening his tunic, placed carefully on his breast. His comrades followed his example in silence ; and then Macnab, step-

ping into the centre of the circle, bade them join hands round him. When they had done so, having first bared their heads, Macnab suddenly, with his face all working with the intensity of his emotion, but with a measured solemnity of voice which was very impressive, said :—

“By the mithers that carriet ye in their wombs, by yer young sisters and brithers at hame in the clachan and the glen, by yer ain wives and weans some o’ ye, SWEAR, swear, I say, that henceforth ye show nae mercy tae the race that has done this accursed deed of bluid !”

Sternly, from deep down in every throat, came the hoarse answer, “I swear !” and verily that oath was kept. Before nightfall the details of the discovery first made by Hector and his comrades had pervaded the whole army, and had changed men into

devils. The horrible tale turned British blood into fire. Men went mad. Half-starved as that army had been, and racked with constant excitement, those who know soldiers know that the temptation to license was unlikely to be resisted. But with this fell stimulus, licence became rapine and carnage. Men raging with drink and blood-thirstiness spared nothing in the form of man—nor were they in another form kinder to women. But the subject need not further be referred to—although in a truthful narrative it was not to be wholly glozed over. Hector Macdonald, too, was hot for blood, but he craved for revenge at the sword and bayonet point in the fair field. The example of his self-restraint under his great provocation, kept his staunch comrade Mick Sullivan from yielding to the temptation which, we had almost said pardonably, overtook so many of his comrades.

## CHAPTER III.

IT was on the 17th of July that the troops marched into Cawnpore, and that the discovery of the fatal well had been made which had driven the British soldiery to madness. Cawnpore was full of wine and spirituous liquors of all kinds, and the men, disregarding entirely for the time their ordinary rations, may be said to have lived wholly on drink. The result was, of course, very disastrous. Cholera began to make itself manifest, and more than one man lying stupefied in the sun, or staggering carelessly along uncovered, was struck down with sunstroke. The General interposed

with all his wonted promptitude. Captain M'Bean, the Commissary-General, received peremptory orders to buy up all the drink in the place, and the Provost-Marshal was set to work invested with plenary powers. Perhaps the Highlanders were the most tiger-like in their greed for rapine and drink. The whole regiment was indeed mad—craving with a wild longing for the realization of the old Jewish precept—blood for blood. Old Macnab's oath was yet ringing in their ears, and on the bosom of many of them lay a coiled-up tress of that golden hair which was to them the badge that constituted them the avengers of blood. Havelock must have felt the case was one beyond the physic that a Provost-Marshal could exhibit, even when in his prescription-book was the dread recipe, "Hang up in their uniform all British sol-

diers found marauding." The real cure was to remove his men out of the sphere of temptation, and that was what the General set himself to effect.

In the evening of the 18th the Highlanders were moved down to take possession of some bungalows which stood at a distance of about half a mile from the Ghaut, lying above the destroyed bridge of boats, from which the crossing was to be effected. While they lay here, and, indeed, while in tents on the plain, Hector Macdonald's organ of acquisitiveness had been to the full as strongly developed as that of any of his fellows. The coveted objects, indeed, differed very widely. While his comrades were looting bags of silver and masses of plate, and, throwing these fastidiously away when they chanced upon a hoard of gold mohurs, and the more easily-carried plunder



that consisted of precious stones, Hector was as industrious a relic-hunter as if he had been a priest-knight of the Crusades. The natives whose knowledge of their own fidelity throughout had been strong enough to deter them from fleeing with their fellows, had collected many of these. In the entrenchment where so much British blood had been poured out, and so many tears had been shed, there had been left, when the hapless exodus took place, many a pitiful memento. Anything of value had been pounced upon by the demon horde that threw themselves vulture-like on the place, while yet Major Vibart's little rear-guard had barely filed out of it. But trifles were left that were beneath the notice of the rebels, insolent with the scent in their nostrils of the coming slaughter, and the sure ruin of the *raj* of Jon Kumpani. There were

children's toy books, with the names of the owners written in them by the mother-donors. There were book-marks, with the words broidered on them, "Peace on earth and good-will," and many another simple token of those who had spent so strange a three weeks inside that earthen rampart. Such things as these had been gleaned by friendly natives, anxious to be able to display them as so many mute propitiations, and Hector Macdonald was an eager buyer.

Within the course of the first day the whisper had gone round among the swarthy huxterers that there was a sad-faced young "Sahib" among the "red-bearded men"—as the Highlanders were termed, from the uniformity of colour among them of that appendage—who had an open hand when any memento of the dead was brought him.

Timidly-jabbering natives, moodily kicked at intervals by Sullivan, whose "throat was dhry," and whose Celtic blood was not a gelid pond, hung around Hector's tent on the 18th, and dodged about the compound of the bungalow, where, on the 19th, he had charge of the regimental guard. One swarthy, supple rogue pulled out from his cummerbund, and with many salaams set before the Sahib a grateful and yet a woeful souvenir. It was an album, with mother-of-pearl boards, the transparent white ghastlily relieved by a ragged splash of dried blood. On the first leaf inside was written the name "Alice Moore," and among the portraits it contained Hector found two the originals of which were not—like the others—strange to him. On one leaf there met his eye the mild, worn features, the calm, sad eye, the white locks of the venerable

Minister at Glenfiloch. When he turned over the <sup>4</sup>next, Mary Home herself looked at him from out the photograph. Assurance was becoming doubly sure, and honest Mick, doing his bit of sentry go out under the verandah, muttered to himself, "Poor creature!" as he saw his comrade sink his face upon the little volume, and heard the groan which came from his very heart.

But yet another token was to come to Hector, to quench the last dim glimmer of hope in his heart. On the morning of the 20th, a native came to him, sent from the guard-room by some of his comrades, who had come to talk among themselves of what they called "Sergeant Macdonald's unco' strange *fret*." This man produced a little pocket-bible. It was dry now, but its leaves were stuck together, and the print had run, as if it had lain some

time in water. As Hector took it up, it opened as it were of its own accord at the 31st Psalm, and lo ! it was not possible to read the words of the book by reason of the blood which had been spilt upon them. Hector turned to the fly-leaf. It was difficult to disengage from its neighbour, so sodden together had the paper become from the action of the water, but at length he accomplished the task. There was writing on it, but the ink had run so that the study was as of a hieroglyphic, and as the hand seemed familiar, with plodding pains Hector spelt out the words. This is what that writing was :—

*“To her dearest father on his birthday,  
From Mary Home.”*

“Where did you get this?”

“Me found it—O great Sahib.”

“Where?” reiterated Hector, with impatience.

“On the sand down at Suttee Chowra, O king, where the white Sahibs were——”

“Damn you, go!” shouted poor maddened Hector, throwing at his head a handful of rupees. The terrified native clutched at what he could intercept, and without waiting to pick up what he had failed to catch, took to his heels, muttering venomous Hindoo curses.

It was all over now. The chain of evidence was flawless. Here was the old man’s bible, picked up on the scene of the first slaughter; Hector’s heart throbbed against the ring of the daughter, which he had found on the gory matting of the scene of the second. He wanted no more relics now, he had had his surfeit of them.

As he sat, with the little bible open before

him at the place where Mary's hand had written the words that had already burnt themselves into his brain, Mick Sullivan came in.

“Heckthor, ma bouchal, sure an’ it’s divil a haporth ye’ve ate since that dridful soight we saw up beyant there. Now, you know, it’s quoite conthrary to the arthicles of war for a sodger to starve the inside av him, which is the Quane’s special prawpertee, wid rispict be it said. And sure as a non-commissioned offisher, it’s yourself is bound for to show an example to the min in the matther of consumption of vittles. Troth, an’ they want that same, the cratures, for divil a bite of prog except drink has a man av the Grenadiers tasted thim two days. Come now, me son, an’ have a morsel of food, just to kape the efforts of the cooks in countenance.”

“Never mind my appetite, Mick—you’re a trump yourself in keeping away from the drink.”

“An’ the loot, ye omadhaun! Faix, an’ I belave if I had used me Tin Commandments discrately, and had anything for to carry it away in, I could have looted enough to buy back the territories onst held in Tipperary by me respected ancestor, Bryan Boroo. But, afther all, it’s a heart-breakin’ business, that same lootin’ is. The more ye have the more ye want, an’ whin ye see a foine chist av drawers that would make a splendid prisint to yer ould mother, it’s enough to make ye jump up and niver come down again, to reflect that ye can’t stow them away in yer waist-bilt.”

“What’s the report about crossing the river?”

“Och, I belave the Grenadiers and the



light company are to be warned to-night. There's the divil's own fuss about the boats. Sure, there's a talk about hangin' all the boatmen that can be got hold of, till the whak av boats is forthcoming? He's a born divil whin he's in arnest, is that Macbean! I am tould, Heckthor, that there's an offisher up at headquarters that made his escape from the massacre down below there, and has been dodgin' about wid the divil a rag on him ever since."

"Up at headquarters, say you?" asked Hector, jumping to his feet.

"Right ye are, me son. But where the divil are ye off to now?"

"I'll tell you when I come back," was Hector's hurried response, as he ran across to Captain Bouverie's quarters. He got a few hours' leave, and started at once for Nawabgunge, where, in the old civil station,

headquarters were located. Hector's inquiries sufficed to find out that the name of the officer for whom he was looking was Thomson, but he could not learn his whereabouts, and as his term of leave was fast expiring, he began to fear that his journey was to be a bootless one. But Thomson was not the only man whose life had been miraculously preserved. Hector fell across a smart little Irishman, by name Murphy, who was one of four survivors. Murphy was not exactly fit for action again; but his spirits were capital, and his powers of description considerable.

“Och, sure, yes, I rimimber Parson Home well enough. He wasn't our padre, ye know—at laste, not till afther the praste died, rist his sowl, although it was mesilf wasn't inconsolable for the loss av him, for he had a divil av an appetite, and we used

to pay our tithes wid grub for want av any-thing else. But afther he died, Parson Home used to come among all alike, and it's very fond everybody was av the dacent white-haired ould gentleman. Had he a daughter? Troth, an' I think he had, if I rimimber right—a black-haired, lissom girl, that was most always wid our captain's wife, Mrs. Moore. Hwhat makes me think I can't be wrong about this is, that out in No. 1 barrack Mrs. Moore had a place fitted for her safety, where she used often to come and sit by her husband, and the girl I spake of, Parson Home's daughter, many a time was wid her there. What happened them, ask ye, sargint? Faith, thin, it's a quistion ye might answer as well as mesilf. I helped Mrs. Moore into one of the boats, and I'm most sure the other was along wid her ; and the last I saw av the padre was in the

wather wid a choild in his arms ; but thin, ye know, the divils opened fire, and it wasn't much of a time, sargint, for to be lookin' round ye, takin' notes about the neighbours."

Honest Murphy could tell no more than he knew, and so Hector thanked him, and bidding him good-bye, started to rejoin his company. On his way past the bungalow in which General Havelock had taken up his residence, whom should he meet face to face but his old chief Colonel, now General Neill. Neill put his hand on his shoulder familiarly, and asked him how it fared with him.

"I have not been here two hours," said he, "and I have already heard of the plucky thing you did on the 16th. I see you have the third stripe on your arm already. That looks well, my lad."

Hector modestly said he had only done his duty, and hoped there were more such chances in store——

“For you, my lad—no doubt—for you. I am just come up here in time to be a fixture, as I was at Allahabad, and to keep Cawnpore while you go out to do battle with the rascals. Have you been down at that well, Macdonald?”

Hector told the General he was one of the party who first discovered it. As he spoke Neill's agitation became intense. He walked to and fro as if he had been on the quarter-deck of a ship—tugging vigorously at his bushy moustache. There was water in his eyes as he faced Hector again.

“My lad,” said he, “the thought of that place, much more the sight of it, unmans me. But this deed has not been done for nothing. I look upon myself this day,

Macdonald, as an instrument in God's hands for inflicting a fearful punishment upon the perpetrators of this revolting and barbarous deed. I will exact a fearful retribution, and brand on them a fearful example. You would not care to stop and give your aid? No; well, your wish to be in the field is natural enough. I wish you well, my lad—good day.”

And so Neill stalked off, with his gloomy brow; and Hector, with a brow no less gloomy, rejoined his company.

## CHAPTER IV.

“PARADE at one o'clock the morn's morning, Sergeant Macdonald. The Grenadiers and the licht companies are to be first ower the water.”

These were the words with which Colour-Sergeant Christy met Hector as the latter rejoined his company after his visit to headquarters.

“Some of the men will be absent, Christy. Three parts of them are on the mad spree.”

“De'il a fear o' them, Macdonald, if they only ken the hour. Gang roun' an' fa' in ony o' them ye may come across.”

Hector sallied out into the town, and the information he and others were charged with brought the men in at the double. Some, it is true, would have stood a chance of going to the guard-room had they come on a parade at home in the state they were in; but these were not the times to put men through their facings to decide the vexed question whether they had exceeded the statutory half-pint. When one o'clock came the muster was complete, and that was as much as even so sanguine a man as Colour-Sergeant Christy expected.

It was a night of such rain as one requires to visit a tropical country to be able to realize. It laughed at great-coats, and made light of woollen tunics. The moment a streak of dawn was visible through the pitchy darkness, the two companies were marched down to the Ghaut, where they



found Mr. Crump, three guns, and a scanty detachment of artillerymen. It was risky work, sending over a detachment so small into such a *terra incognita* as was the other side. For aught anyone on the Cawnpore side knew, the apparent desertion of the opposite bank might be a mere ruse, and the enemy might be in force behind the swamp which lined the banks. But the venture had to be made—and made piecemeal, too, for the boats were few and small. Captain Bouverie, of the Grenadiers, was in command of the detachment. The moment he and half the company landed on the Oude bank, a cordon of sentries was advanced cautiously to the front, with orders to fall back on the little main body if anything suspicious was visible. Crump and a gun formed the next cargo, and gradually, without mishap, the two companies and

the three guns were ferried over. As Hector stepped into the boat he saw through the haze of the dawn a mounted figure silently watching the embarkation. The mounted man was short, upright, and slim. Another man, on foot, had his right hand on the pommel of the other's saddle, and with his left was gesticulating, to all appearance, angrily and earnestly, while the horseman sat drawn up in what seemed a haughty immobility. The man on foot was square-shouldered and stalwart. As Hector passed the rain lightened for a moment, and he saw that the two were Neill and Havelock, apparently engaged in a dispute.

There were no rations all that day. The men had been landed in a swamp, and with the exception of a few low sandhills to the right front, all seemed swamp alike. On the verge of the sandhills, where the road

skirted them, there stood a dismantled toll-house, which Captain Bouverie ordered Mr. Crowe to occupy as a picket. Sergeant Macdonald was the sergeant of the picket, and Allan Stuart the corporal. The toll-house had no roof on it, and the fellows on duty attempted to screen themselves in a measure from the pitiless downpour by rigging up a chapper—as the bamboo portable roofing of a native hut is called. The chapper answered its purpose in some little degree, but it was begrimed with dirt, which the streams of rain washed off, and carried down upon the faces of the men who were sheltered beneath, smudging them to a tint that rendered them hardly distinguishable from the dusky children of the soil. Remarkably little, however, did the fellows care for the colour of their faces if they could only have got something to put inside

them. But there seemed no prospect of this.

“Od, Jock, my wame’s as toom as the regimental drum !” was Corporal Stuart’s grumbling remark.

Jock Matheson was a bit of a philosopher.

“Weel, Allan, I kenna what’s the use o’ speakin’ aboot it. Gin it’s toom, it’s no fu’, and ye canna get ow’r that proposeetion.”

“Man,” said a Clachnacudden boy, “gin I was in Tamnahurich Street this daumed coorse afterneen, I wad ken brawly whaur tae fill my kite.”

“But ye see ye’re nae in Tamnahurich Street,” testily replied Matheson ; “and troth it’s my belief Tamnahurich Street has gude reason to bless her nainsel that ye’re no an inhabitant.”

“Sergeant of the picket !” shouted the advanced sentry, and the conclave broke up. Hector joined the sentry, who reported

strange sounds, as of something advancing, on the other side of the ridge. Hector listened, and then, drawing in the sentry, reported to Mr. Crowe that movements were certainly taking place under cover of the ridge. All stood to arms behind the feeble shelter of the shattered toll-house, and waited the event. Slowly and deliberately across the ridge there came advancing directly toward the picket—first one black bullock and then another. A hearty laugh went round as the solemn cattle stalked sedately forward through the rain, and Corporal Stuart's "toom wame" prompted a "happy thought."

"Let's shoot them an' eat them," quoth Allan.

Crowe laughed and turned away; to tell the truth, he was as hungry as anybody.

"Tak' ye ane," said Allan to the Clach-

nacudden boy, "and I'll tak' the tither."

"Ay, and gin ye miss we'll gaur ye ride the stang," said Jock Matheson, excited out of his philosophy by the near prospect of butcher-meat.

The shots rang out, and the bullocks fell. In a twinkling scouts were across from the fishermen's huts, where the bulk of the two companies were, and they bore back the glorious tidings. Fires were lit, and kept alight by the expedient of the men taking off their great-coats and holding them over the fire umbrella fashion, while the meat was broiled and a few dampers toasted from the sweepings of the haversacks. Ere long, Corporal Stuart was able to carry in on his bayonet a nicely done broil and a cake to Mr. Crowe, who did not require to be twice asked. Then the men, both in the huts and in the toll-house, ate their rough improvised

dinner, and the "toom wames" were filled.

"It's geyan teuch," said an Aberdeen man, after he had eaten about three pounds in a semi-raw state.

"Come, I like that," quoth the corporal; "a brose fed, neep-headit Buchan stirk like you, grumblin' at fat I ca' an interposection o' Providence. Hoo often did they gie ye meat, teuch or tender, in that bothy ye were siccan an ornament o'?"

"Brose an' neeps is better nor braxy, ony day, corporal: an' I'm thinkin' that's been the feck o' your leavin' afore auld Sargint M'Gregor was dottled eneugh tae gae ye the shillin'! Ye're geyan smooth-skinned, and so is corbies and heedie craws, that leeve on garbage—braxy, and sic like."

Stuart's Highland blood came into his face at the biting retort of the pawky Buchan man, and an angry reply rose to his lips.

But ere he could utter it, Mr. Crump, the officer in command of the detachment of artillery, appeared through the rain, and entered the toll-house.

"I say, Crowe!" he exclaimed, "you have a glorious scent of cookery here. My fellows are on the verge of mutiny and starvation, because no rations have come their way. How—where did your fellows get their meat from?"

"Ask the corporal there," replied Crowe, with a laugh.

Crump put the interrogation to Stuart accordingly.

"Out yonder, sir," was Stuart's reply, with a vague wave of his hand into space. He might have meant anywhere between them and Lucknow.

"Here's the beastie, Mr. Crump," said the Inverness man, pointing to what had been



left of the bullock after the Grenadier Company in the gross had regaled themselves somewhat at random off it.

Crump strode over and looked down upon it.

“My God, it’s alive now !” he cried.

Certainly the meat almost merited the aspersion. The sinews, cut anyhow, as they were, were still quivering with muscular contraction, which was a relic of animation.

“Na, we’re nae cannibals, Maister Crump,” rather hotly replied the Buchan man. “Nae offence ; but gin Allan Stuart’s firelock had pitten a ba’ through you as it did through that beastie, the Arteelery chappies wad be howkin’ a hole for ye the noo.”

Hector interposed. “There is no reason why Mr. Crump’s men should starve while you are full, is there ? Mr. Crowe, sir, may I tell off two men to take the carcass, such

as it is, across to the artillery detachment?"

Crowe gave his consent, and when Matheson and the Buchan man had followed Crump accordingly, they found that officer engaged in rating his fellows for a parcel of purposeless duffers, who starved and grumbled when the Highlanders kept their weather eye open, ate, and were filled.

## CHAPTER V.

IN the course of a week the whole force had crossed into Oude. As the detachments came over they were sent on to Mungulwar, a village about six miles from the river, and situated on the crest of a slight rising ground. It had originally been taken possession of by the Highlanders and the artillery, and when they occupied it, it had only just been evacuated by a body of Sepoys, who, on the tidings of their approach, had fallen backward along the Lucknow road to Onao. On the 28th the advancing force was complete. It was not much to boast of. There were only 1,500 men, all told, and at least three hun-

dred of these were Sikhs. The cavalry was a mere handful, and there were but ten guns of small calibre, poorly equipped, and worse manned. The health of the little force was not very good. The Cawnpore episode of dissipation had predisposed many a frame to cholera, which was already at work with its ravages. Cholera is a terrible damper to high spirits; and, putting this to one side, the fillip which the hope of saving the women and children had given to the men was now gone. But the place of the exuberant excitement had been taken by not a whit the less efficient a stimulant to hungry fighting. The substitute was a gloomy, settled, deep lust for blood. It was not wrath—the blaze of anger had gone by; but the red coal was left in the heart of every man, not to be dulled by the profusest shedding of blood.

Silently and mechanically the little army fell in at daybreak on the 29th, and pushed on the road three miles to Onao. But there was hot work to be gone through before Onao could be reached. A village stood across the road, right in front of the entrance to the town, which extended some distance to the right. This pestilent village could not be circumvented on either side, by reason of the universal inundations. There was nothing for it but to carry the high road through the village. The advance of the enemy were in force before it, inside a strong garden wall, while every house in the village was swarming with fully-armed desperadoes. The work of clearing it was handed over to the Highlanders and the Madras men—always brethren in arms. They were formed ready to go at it, but had to wait a little till artillery should come up. The

Pandies made the most of their time, and dropped half a dozen men of the Highlanders as they stood at ease. Colonel Hamilton was on the right, out of range, and one of the officers went and told him of the execution that was being done. Watty stuck his lower lip out meditatively, and then wheeled about and sought the General. "Retire them out of range till the guns come up," was Havelock's prescription. "Let them go at the place with the first intention," was Hamilton's amendment; and he carried it. Galloping back, he gave the word, and the Highlanders and the Lambs went pell-mell at the spitfire garden wall and village. A tearing fire met them in the teeth as they came up at the run. Jack Sparrow, of No. 2 Company, was the first man on the wall, but he was knocked off it in an instant, with a bullet through his head, and another

through his chest. Tom Halliday was the second; and he, too, went back with a bayonet skewered through his throat. Another man trying to force a gate was shot through a knot that had fallen out in the shrunk wood. At length the men tumbled over the garden wall in a body, and made a dash for the village. It was even fiercer work here. Not a house but was loop-holed, and seething full of fanatics maddened with bang. The street was crossed by intersecting fires. Lieutenant Boyle dashed into the first house at the head of some men of his company. A Pandy flew at his throat as he burst the door open, and actually fastened his teeth in his jaw. Boyle smashed his face in with the hilt of his sword, and rushed forward. He ran on a bayonet point. His men bore him out, and then came back and carried the house by a mad

rush. They fired it, and the flames spread. The devils in the contiguous houses fought like wild cats while they roasted. Mick Sullivan, Hector Macdonald, and Sergeant Christy smashed in the door of a house on the left side of the way, and beat the desperate inmates up the narrow stair on to the roof. Sullivan was leading. He put his head down, and made a bolt upwards nigger-fashion—the others close behind him. Just as he gained the top of the narrow staircase, he came back upon them like an avalanche. A fellow had broken his fire-lock over his head.

“Are you killed, Mick?” asked Hector, with gasping irrationality.

“D——n the haporth the worse am I—the Sullivans always were famous for thick skulls”—and he tore up the steps again like a raving bull. This time he made his foot-



ing good, catching a Pandy in the stomach with his head, and sending him over the parapet as if he had been fired from a gun. The others were close on his heels, and a desperate hand to hand combat ensued. They were too close to use weapons. Christy was as strong as a horse, and his tactics were to catch men up by main force and chuck them into the street. Sullivan had got hold of the barrel of the musket that had been broken over his head, and was taking his revenge out of it by using it *à la* shillelagh. Hector went in somehow—anyhow. They cleared the roof just in time to escape downstairs before the fire caught the building. There was a battery of two guns at the top of the street, which sent shot tearing down it incessantly, served as they were by the smart Oude gunners. The attacking force could not get at these

to silence them, by reason of the cross fire from the loop-holed houses. But the 64th came up at the double; there was a wild miscellaneous rush of them, the Highlanders and the Lambs, and the village was taken.

The main body marched through the village, and deployed on the slip of dry ground between it and the gate of the town of Onao, which stretched to the right. Onao was a strong place, but it was undefended. The enemy had seen his mistake, and was coming down in force to occupy the town. This was to be prevented, come what might; and Havelock's force, leaving Onao on its right, made a rapid dash up the high road, so as to get between the enemy and the town. There was another oasis here in the wilderness of desolation, and the General rapidly deployed his force on it, massing his artillery in the centre, so as

to command the high road. Down came, storming and seething, the dense compact masses of the enemy, horse, foot, and artillery, in one incoherent jumble. When they came within range, Maude opened upon them point-blank with grape, and effectually arrested the onward rush. The van tried to recoil upon its supports, but the impetus had not yet forsaken the main body, and only worse confusion was the result. A desperate attempt was made to deploy on either side of the main road. But guns disappeared bodily in the impracticable swamps, and men followed helplessly into the slough. The dense mass wavered, and then began to melt away. The "Lambs" broke into skirmishing order, taking the water on either side of the road like ducks, and a couple of guns were hastily pushed forward to complete the rout. It was com-

pleted with one exception. The artillerymen of the Oude force, perhaps the finest native artillery in India, stood to their guns like mastiff dogs. Run they would not, and so the Madras men gave them the *coup de grace* as they fought round their beloved pieces to the very last gasp. And so, with the capture of fifteen guns, and the slaughter of about five hundred natives, ended the battle of Onao.

When the troops piled arms and broke off for dinner, there were a good many of the Grenadier company of the Rosshire Buffs who did not, in nautical phrase, answer to the number of their mess. Of those who were still able to exercise an appreciable influence on the commissariat, not a few bore tokens of the hot fray just over. From the character of the fighting in the village most of the wounds were about the head—so

much so, indeed, that Mr. Sullivan educed a parallel between that halt and “the marnin’ afther Donnybrook Fair.”

Mr. Sullivan himself had not come out scathless. Notwithstanding the boasted hardness of the family skull of the Sullivan race, his head had been pretty decently broken, and the honest fellow’s hair was matted with blood. But Mick thought nothing of it, and when the doctor came round and offered to apply sticking-plaister, Mick preferred what he asserted was the sovereignest remedy of “letting it barken and be hanged to it.” Colour-Sergeant Christy had a clip on the cheek with a tulwar, which certainly did not improve his beauty. Old Macnab had acquired what he himself designated a “yark” across his high bald forehead, the blood from which mingled lovingly with the “sneeshun” stains on his upper lip.

But a little water and sticking-plaister, and, better still, a hastily-cooked meal and a glass of rum, set them all to rights again, and all were fresh and ready for more work when Mr. M'Pherson gave the word to fall in again. One word about the native cooks. These fellows, who had been to Persia with the Highlanders, and were as staunch as steel (they were Bombay men, not Bengalees), were always close upon the heels of their "Sahibs," no matter where they were. It may be that this alacrity was the result of a dread lest they should be cut off in the rear. As a result they were sometimes under fire, or at all events thought they were. Their custom under these trying circumstances was very ludicrous. Each man put on his head, helmet wise, the pot which he carried, and shutting his eyes, squatted himself down, resigned, till the scrimmage had blown over.

Busseeretgunge lay at a distance of six miles along the Lucknow road—a walled town, with a strong turreted gate, protected by an earthwork and a battery. When the little army got within artillery range, the guns were brought up and set to work on the gateway. The 78th and the Fusiliers were told off to storm the gateway, and the 64th were sent to circumvent the exit at the further end of the town. The former advanced at the double; but the teeth of the enemy's battery were not yet drawn, and the cannonade which met them played havoc in the ranks. Lives were precious, and young Havelock coming up at the gallop, brought the order for the assaulting force to lie down, while the guns had another turn over their heads. The men were very impatient under what they took for a slight on their prowess, but there was

nothing for it but to obey orders. The moment our artillery fire ceased, and before the order was given to rise and charge, a man of the 78th, named Geordie Johnson, a "Glasgow chappie," as he was wont to call himself, sprang to his feet, and running in the teeth of the fire right up to an embrasure in the earthwork, went quietly down on one knee, and began firing in among the gunners as fast as he could load. The next discharge of the gun blew Johnson to smithereens, but by this time his comrades were charging at the double. They gave one shout as they jumped the trench, and tumbled headlong into the battery and through the gate, and the place was won. In one of the turrets of the gateway a marksman had stationed himself, who was blazing away at his ease down upon the throng below. A man of the Highlanders, named



Maxwell Mowatt, saw the mischief he was doing, and very sensibly ascended the town tower on the other side and shot the fellow. Almost at the same moment another 78th man, named Robinson, noticed the Pandy on the turret as well, and taking a more direct course, climbed the stair of the turret from which the man was firing, with the intent of putting a stop to his little amusement. While Robinson was on the way up, Maxwell shot the Pandy ; and honest Robinson swore not a little at finding he had had his climb for nothing. A practical man, however, it struck him that the dead Sepoy might have something of value about him, so he searched him, and quietly looted one hundred and forty rupees out of his cummerbund.

The enemy rushed through the town in wild disorganization, the Highlanders and

Fusiliers sticking to their skirts like leeches. The pursuit lasted along the road on the other side of Onao, and our men, as they came tumbling out of the further gate, saw elephants and horses, and squadrons of cavalry, and fugitive batteries, all blended in a chaotic medley as the tide of defeat ebbed backward from Busseeretgunge. Now was the time for the flanked movement of the 64th to have had a splendid effect ; had that regiment been outside the further gate, ready to complete what the direct attack had so auspiciously begun, the victory of that day would have been complete. But the regiment had halted on the way, and set about apathetically exchanging "long bowls" with the defenders of the village which lay in their path. There is no more effectual recipe for working the fighting humour out of the soldiers than letting them

look at a distance, and in repose, at the job they have to do. Unless they are old in the ways of fighting, the more they look at it the less they like it, and the demon procrastination, proverbially the "thief of time," too often steals also the courage which, had it not been for the delay, would have cheerfully improved the time. Young Havelock dashed up to the laggard regiment with an angry message from his father—"If you don't take the village, I'll send men that will, and put an everlasting disgrace upon you!" Whereupon an Irishman, named Cavanagh, lost his discretion under the burning sense of shame, and, throwing himself single-handed upon the enemy, cursing his comrades with angry unction as he rushed forward, was literally hacked in bits as he fought—the centre of a frantic *mêlée* of malignantly-triumphant Pandies. Then, in-

deed, his blood warmed that of his comrades, and they carried the village at the bayonet-point; but their tardy valour was unavailing to recall the opportunity which their previous *faineance* had allowed to escape. Havelock was very angry, and Havelock's anger had a biting edge on it. When his order of the following day came to be read at the head of the several regiments, there was a sentence amidst the Napoleonic eulogy which effectually prevented any cheering on the 64th's parade: "Some of you," such were the biting words, "fought as if the cholera had seized your minds as well as your bodies."

But Havelock could utter words of a different tenour to these. After the bugles had sounded the "halt," the General rode to the front to select a post for his cavalry picket. While he was gone the shades of

night had begun to close, and the weary soldiers had thrown themselves down where they stood, littering the roadway as one may see on a road at home a drove of cattle, or a flock of sheep, when the drovers cease to urge their charge forward. As Havelock came back he had to pass through this improvised bivouac. Weary as were the men, they were elate with the consciousness of victory; their blood had not yet cooled down from the boiling point it had reached during the day. Mick Sullivan was on the outside of all his comrades, silent, for a wonder, as he lay, perhaps returning thanks to the "blissed Vargin" for the thickness of the family skull. As he lay, a horseman coming from the front nearly rode over him. It was with characteristic fervour that Mick began to swear, as he rolled himself lazily out of the way. But the grumble

died on his lips as he looked up, and through the increasing darkness saw the white moustache and the dark bright eye of the General. Honest Mick was on his legs in a second, letting out of him, as he sprang up, a roar, "Make way for the Ginerel!" From man to man the cry ran with a strange spasm of enthusiasm, as the Highlanders and Blue Caps drew themselves off to either side, leaving a lane down the centre for their leader. His worn face lighted up with a proud and pleased glow, as he rose in his stirrups, and shouted in his mellow voice,

"You've done that same right well to-day already, my lads!"

The spontaneous and evidently sincere compliment went to the hearts of these rough, tired soldiers on the Busseeretgunge Causeway. Old Macnab, cap in hand, led off.

“God bless the General!” he shouted, and the shout was taken up by twice a hundred throats, as the upright, spare figure on the wiry horse disappeared into the gloom.

## CHAPTER VI.

NEXT day was spent in estimating the position of the little force. Notwithstanding the elation of victory, that position was hardly encouraging. Out of the scanty muster-roll eighty-eight had been killed and wounded the day before, and as many were down with cholera and sickness. Still there was not the remotest notion in the ranks that anything else was intended but a further advance. The men were in fine spirits, and had, as Mick Sullivan phrased it, "gained the first chalk of the game." Some of the old hands shook their heads in wonderment when they saw the guns being de-



stroyed which they had captured the day before. But when the "fall in" sounded on the following morning, the men dropped into their places with their faces, as a matter of course, turned towards Lucknow, and a not loud, but deep, murmur ran through the ranks when it was made apparent that the General had determined on retreat. He had his reasons, no doubt. This is not the place to discuss the question; but men in the ranks have a habit of criticising as they obey. The Highlanders marched backward along the road to Mungelwar in a dogged silence, broken occasionally by a growl from some of the more impulsive of the fellows. Mr. Sullivan found it very difficult to repress his feelings of anger and disgust; and, indeed, he was so outspoken that he incurred a sharp rebuke from Mr. Crowe, who asked him suggestively whether he knew what a drum-

head court-martial meant. The mental and the bodily conditions are closely allied to each other. The cholera took a great grip this day of downhearted men. The dhoolies were full of sick before the start, and several men died on the road, and were left unburied where the life went out of them. Altogether, one would hardly have recognized the dispirited, dejected regiments who slouched into the old position at Mungelwar, for the same troops which, but the day before, full of dash, and buoyant with enthusiasm, had fought almost from the rising of the sun till the going down of the same.

While the troops were thus lying a second time at Mungelwar, the cholera committed worse havoc in the ranks than the sword of the enemy had done. But the men of this army had learned to carry their lives in their hands, whether they confronted the grisly

demon of disease, or looked into the muzzle of a Sepoy field-piece. The fighting humour was very strong within them, and if the General, and circumstances, prevented them from venting it on their natural enemy, they found scope for it by an ebullition of intestine warfare. The 84th and the 64th had long entertained what did not amount to enmity, but certainly had attained the dimensions of a mutual grudge. The affair at Busseeret-gunge had not helped to smooth this feeling, since it gave the 84th a handle for sarcastic allusions to the "mental cholera" of the other regiment. At Mungelwar it was determined to settle the difference between the two corps by the arbitrament of single combat. But the fight was not to be for honour alone. A hundred rupees, by way of stake-money, were easily got together among men who had previously, some of them, thrown

away silver in order that they might loot the less cumbrous gold. The champion of the 84th was a man named Toomie, who had a reputation, besides his skill with his fists, for running and walking. He had once won a running match, in full marching order, against other men who did not carry an ounce of superfluous weight. Oonie stood up for the credit of the 64th, a square-built extract from the county Connaught. Each was reckoned the best man in his regiment, and the event was invested with far more than a personal interest. The officers kept out of sight, being presumably in utter ignorance of the matter of which everyone else was full. It was, indeed, said that they had their opinions, and backed them with not a little pertinacity—but, be this as it may, the combat experienced no interruption from the superior authorities. Oonie took his punish-

ment like a trump, but in the twenty-fourth round circumstances over which he had no control (which may be specified as blindness, dashed with a touch of faintness) prevented him from obeying the call of time, and the gallant Toomie won, not without considerable detriment to his personal appearance. On the conclusion of the battle the two regiments loyally buried the hatchet, and refrained thenceforward from aggravating taunts.

But although this little interlude diversified the monotony of inaction, the soldiers, ignorant of the complications under the responsibility of which their General laboured, chafed unceasingly under the *inertia* to which they were condemned. Believing thoroughly in themselves, they thought it was only necessary to finally determine to press forward and relieve Lucknow, and

that the formation of the resolution was tantamount to the accomplishment of the enterprise. They had no patience with the raft-constructing triumphs of Captain Cromelin, and were anxious only to go forward. But generalship and fate alike were against their generous ardour. Neill, on the other side of the river, found, with all his sanguine belief in himself, and all his contempt for the enemy, that a few dozen invalids could not stand up against four thousand mutineers supported by field batteries ; and earnest as he had been in urging Havelock's advance against that General's better wisdom, he had now to apply to him for assistance to hold Cawnpore.

Havelock, no doubt, had this emergency among the contingencies which weighed with him to prevent his pushing forward to Lucknow. Come what would, Cawnpore

must be held, the key, as it was, to communications with Allahabad, the only place where a force could be concentrated, if ever it should be practicable to make another attempt for the succour of Lucknow. It was with heavy hearts that the men of the now greatly reduced force accepted the order to turn out and aid in sending across the river the baggage and spare ammunition. It was a strange contrast presented by the dejected, hollow-eyed, war-worn men, toiling languidly at this disheartening work, and by the same men, as six weeks ago, full of hope and zeal and gladsome readiness, they had got the baggage ready for the march from Allahabad. The little remnant of the 78th was specially gloomy and bitter. The hunger and thirst for blood among them, kept alive and gnawing by those slender tresses of pale gold hair which some of them wore under

their belts, although many a bold heart which had once beat against that ghastly badge had been stilled by sword or by disease, was not yet nearly appeased, and they ravened for battle in a silent, dogged, saturnine manner, cursing inwardly as they loaded the hackeries and buckled together the packages. But a gleam of the kind of sunshine they so longed for was yet to irradiate the gloom of their position. Suddenly the orderly sergeants of companies were sent for, and speedily came back with orders. These orders were to fall in, and march once more against an enemy. Information had reached Havelock that the Sepoys had come down in force, and had once more occupied Busseeretgunge, the scene already of two signal defeats, and he had determined to leave with them the memory of a third.



The sorely weakened force marched out on the afternoon of the 11th of August, and reached by nightfall the well-remembered environs of the village of Onao. They had no tents, and the village afforded no shelter. The charred fragments alone remained of what once had been a considerable place, and here and there in the deserted village lay a skeleton, the bones already polished white by the foul native dogs and the loathsome vulture and buzzard. Amidst a terrific deluge of tropical rain, the troops, tentless and shelterless, took up their position for the night under the trees among the gardens surrounding the village, with pickets pushed out some distance to the front towards Busseeretgunge. What rest was to be obtained under such circumstances was obtained, and at dawn the stiffened and wet soldiers fell into their places again, and

pushed onwards towards Busseeretgunge. The men had come to know well the scene of a double victory, and fell a speculating among themselves how this time the enemy would receive them. The gateway, the scene of one tough contest, they knew was destroyed, and the straight-going Highlanders were devoutly hoping they should not be condemned to take part in one of the General's well-known "flank movements." The gossip in the ranks was cut short abruptly, some distance before Busseeretgunge was reached at all. The enemy had most likely found that once strong place now untenable, for they had selected the village of Boorhiya, about a mile and a half in advance of it, for their stand-point. Nor had they done this rashly or foolishly. The position was an excellent one. They had fortified it with far more than their

usual care. They had entrenched the village, standing as it did upon the main road, and in front of it had planted a strong battery. A mound rose about three hundred yards to the left of the village, upon which the mutineers' left flank rested, and with no little skill they had placed here three guns, which swept all the front between the mound and the road. An entrenched line ran all the way between the two batteries, and altogether the place seemed very formidable. The weakest part of it to all appearance was in the centre, where there were no guns, and the right wing, consisting of the Highlanders and the Fusiliers, pressed forward with the design of bisecting the enemy's position. Between them and the entrenchment spread what seemed a broad level green plain, so smooth that a field-day might have been worked upon it. Quickly

and compactly the Highlanders and the Fusiliers pressed forward, stimulated to activity by an occasional enfilading shot from either battery. Already they were on the green plain, and were pulling themselves together preparatory to making a dash upon the entrenchment. Suddenly Colonel Hamilton, who was riding a little to the front, subsided with a comical jerk, a squirt of water spurting up all around him. His bugler followed him, and the men, halting involuntarily, could not refrain from a roar of laughter. The two horses were "laired" up to the girth in just such a deceptive quagmire as is known in Scotland by the name of a "wallee." The greensward was a swindle of nature—it covered a swamp which would have swallowed Havelock's army bodily, and been none the more solid. And so it was at once seen how much stronger than it

looked was the position of the enemy.

“Watty” scrambled on to *terra firma* in not the most dignified style—his horse, however, still a fixture, and going deeper every minute. Colonel Hamilton, as his custom was, fell a pondering, thumb and finger upon chin. The attitude was a proverbial one in the regiment. Colonel Hamilton had a hobby for engineering tactics, and it was thus he thought out his problems; so that when he was seen so pondering, his men had a way of remarking, “There’s Watty at the engineering again.” And it was clear enough that it would take some engineering to get out the colonel’s horse. Pearson’s, which had broken the surface nearer the edge, had already floundered out. At length, with the help of firelocks used as crowbars, and a goodly bevy dragging at the tail, the animal was fished out and

the colonel remounted. It was obvious, however, that there was no thoroughfare across the swamp, so the wing broke into two: the Fusiliers went off to the right to turn the edge of the swamp, and so come upon the mound whence the three guns were blazing away at them. The Highlanders, inclining to their left, struck the main road down which the battery in front of the village looked full front. The storm of shot was terrific. Their guns were admirably served, and their fire was the severest the Highlanders had yet encountered. Olpherts came up with his guns, and tried to draw the teeth of the battery before the Highlanders essayed to capture it; but although he had more guns and heavier ordnance, he could not get any advantage over the Pandý artillerymen, crouched down as they were behind substantial earthworks.

There was nothing for it, therefore, if victory was to be won, but to give the Highlanders the chance they coveted. The order came. There were not above a hundred men, all told, in the little array, but they went to the front as if the Ross-shire Buffs were at its full strength. It was a longish distance up to the battery, and Colonel Hamilton did not let his lads out till they were within a hundred yards. The artilleryists loaded and fired as if they had been galvanised; the infantry, showing their ugly faces and the muzzles of their pieces over the earthwork, drew trigger with terrible rapidity. Up through the storm walked the Highlanders, closing in as men fell, till the word "Charge!" was given. Then came the rush and cheer, and in another minute the carnage. The artillerymen stuck to their guns, but only to die beside them. The infantry

quailed at the cheer, and had broken and fled ere the avalanche of Highlanders had poured in upon the battery. Men were quick of expedient and rough of speech in those stirring times. Who was first in the battery it is not easy to tell. But three men who were among the first, having slaughtered the artillerymen around the centre gun, and raging for the lives of the fleeing infantry, shouted out, as if by a common impulse, "Wheel her round and give the —— a dose of their own physic." The names of these three men were Will Thomson of Aberdeen, Brown of Nairn, and Alexander of Cam-lachie. Quick as thought they slewed the heavy gun round, and pitched a charge into her muzzle. The rammer was smashed—but what of that? Anything at a pinch. They sent the charge home with the muzzles of their firelocks, and the Sepoy guns were



slaughtering the Sepoy fugitives in shorter time than it has taken to tell of the episode. While, hot with the ardour of the battle, the men were cheering as they plied the enemy with pills from their own medicine chest (as Mick Sullivan styled the application), Havelock rode into the redoubt. It was no time for speechifying, and yet out of the fulness of the old soldier's proud heart the mouth spake.

“A Victoria Cross to the first man in!” he shouted, amidst the din of the cheering and the roar of the guns; and most heard him, and swelled the din with a louder cheer. Then the mutineer infantry, having got out of range and halted, the Highlanders and the Fusiliers, who had by this time coalesced, went up the main road after them, chased them through the town of Busseeret-gunge, and had a final brush with them on

the memorable causeway. It was not without loss that this decisive success had been achieved—nearly a fourth of the Highlanders were killed and wounded ; but more than three hundred of the mutineers that day went to Hades. The Victoria Cross for the first man into the redoubt was, after much investigation, and with no little dubiety, stated by Colonel Hamilton to have been equally earned by Lieutenant Campbell and Lieutenant Crowe. Campbell died of cholera the day after the regiment marched into Cawnpore, and Crowe got the cross. Whether one, if not all of the three men whose names have been mentioned, did not deserve it richly, the reader is able to form his own opinion.

Among those wounded were both Sergeant Macdonald and Private Sullivan. Hector's injury was comparatively trivial.

A splinter struck him on the left arm and made a rather ugly jagged wound, but he was able to be with his comrades to the last, and, indeed, he marched back to Mungelwar. Mr. Sullivan fared worse. One of the gunners in the battery, who had been cut down by that perfervid member of the Grenadier company, had struck upwards while experiencing the novel sensation of a bayonet sticking through his chest. With his short, sharp sword he had wounded Mick in the back part of the knee, cutting some of the ligatures, and effectually preventing him from joining in the pursuit. Indeed, when the doctor saw honest Mick, who was sitting rather forlornly on the edge of the earthwork, making disparaging remarks as to the dead Sepoy, who "hadn't sinse enough to kick out respectable, widout bein' spiteful," he shook his head over the

divided tendons, and told Mr. Sullivan that it was probable he would be lame for life. Mick's first question was whether the lameness would be of a character to debar him from riding, and being told that it would not, he took the matter very philosophically, telling the doctor that he was sick of being a "swaddy," which is a dragoonist term for foot soldiers, and expressing his intention forthwith of volunteering to join the cavalry. A period of inaction, however, intervened before Mick was able to put this design into execution, for it was quite three weeks before he was able to find out whether he was lame or not.

## CHAPTER VII.

THE same night the force marched back to Mungelwar, and the next morning, in the midst of a deluge of rain, such as was exceptional even in India, it crossed the river back into Cawnpore. Neill was on the Cawnpore side, superintending the debarkation, and as Hector, with his arm in a sling, stepped ashore, his old chief gave him a nod and a smile of recognition. It was a dismal morning, and men's hearts were very low as they splashed along the miry roads out on to the swampy Sevada plain, where they had bivouacked the day after the battle of Cawnpore. Here, in what was

little better than a swamp, the tents were pitched, and the men, wet, weary, and heart-sick, threw themselves down on the damp ground, careless whether they should rise again. Some of them never did so. That night the cholera, which had never quite left them, broke out with terrible virulence. It seemed, indeed, as if half the men were on fatigue carrying the other half to hospital, and, when the evening came, the funeral processions were ghastly. Next day was as bad or worse, and there seemed a certainty that in no long time the troops would be utterly annihilated. On the 16th Havelock marched against the mutineers at Bithoor; but Sullivan was in hospital, and Hector's arm had become so seriously inflamed that, although not there, he was unable to do duty, and was therefore left behind. After the troops had

marched off, he walked up to head-quarters, and got into conversation with some of the men who had been left behind with Neill when the force crossed the Ganges. They told him many a strange story. They told him of the terrible vengeance Neill had taken for the massacre of the women and children—how he had first reverently covered in the ghastly well, and then erected a gallows over against it. How he had issued an order that no British hand should wipe out that blood, but that every stain should be erased piecemeal by condemned mutineers of high caste prior to being hanged. A sergeant showed him a copy of the original order, which, when he had read it, recalled to him Neill's parting words to himself.

This was what he read:—"Brigadier-General Neill has determined that every

stain of that innocent blood shall be cleared up and wiped out, previous to their execution, by such of the miscreants as may be hereafter apprehended, who took an active part in the mutiny, to be selected according to their rank, caste, and degree of guilt. Each miscreant, after sentence of death has been pronounced upon him, will be taken down to the house in question, under a guard, and will be forced into cleaning up a small portion of the blood-stains ; the task will be made as revolting to his feelings as possible, and the Provost-Marshal will use his lash in forcing anyone objecting to complete his task. After properly cleaning up his portion, the culprit is to be immediately hanged, and for this purpose a gallows will be erected close at hand." And then the two sergeants walked down to the bungalow where the dreadful deed had been perpe-



trated and the dreadful retribution exacted. Hector saw but little change save in the filling up of the well and in the standing gallows, the cross-beam of which had sunk in the middle, in mute testimony of the weighty work to which it had been put. The floor of the room was no longer gory, but the splashes and sword-cuts were there still. The other sergeant told Hector what he had seen done in the way of retribution in that room in which the two were standing—how Neill poured water on the bloody floor, and under threats of the lash, and at times its infliction, made high-class Brahmins lick it up with their tongues, and then brought them and hanged them on the gallows over the well, finally burying their carcasses in the public road. How, to enhance the burden of their burden, he had made the Provost-Marshal rub their black hides over with the

hated pork, and had forced lard between their teeth, amid the shrinking terror and horror of the native population. Hector turned away sick at the recital, and, hot as was his wrath toward the race, wondered mightily how it could have been that Neill, whom he knew at heart to be a humane man and a sincere Christian, could have been so far left to himself as to perpetrate what seemed the wantonness of barbarity. A day or two after, Neill himself rode down through the swampy lines of the Highlanders. The force had come back from Bithoor, sorely thinned with cholera and sunstrokes. Trophies had been brought away for dead men left behind. One man had brought in a golden peacock with eyes formed of rubies. Captain Beatson had annexed a solid silver howdah, which had been borne by the elephant that had been wont to carry the Nana's

favourite wife. One of the company, fonder of live stock than of plunder, which was indeed his to-day, but might be others' to-morrow, for men's lives were not worth an hour's purchase, had brought away a couple of savage bulldogs, which the Nana had obtained from England, and which had terrified the darkies who had, till the last attack upon it, hovered around the dismantled palace. The brutes, fastened now to a tent pole, bayed ferociously at Neill, as he rode in among the tents, and, dismounting, began to ask the men what were their circumstances. There was not much need to put searching questions on the subject. Things were bad enough to the most superficial observer.

“We’re deeing like rotten sheep, sir,” was old Macnab’s response to the General’s inquiry; “we micht as weel be billeted in a

moss hag, an', faith, I kenna whether the water comes the fastest oot o' the grun' or through the canvas. Here's twa puir lads on the broad of their backs wi' the cholery, an' as for the rheumatics, fat can ye expect when we dinna ken fat it is tae hae a dry steek frae morn till nicht, and frae nicht till morn? Gin we could only get out o' this bog and inside waa's, be they stane or timmer, there might be a chance for some o' us, but I sair doot, if we bide here lang, the Ross-shire Buffs will be a-wantin' a Grenadier company a'thegither. No tae say that the ithier companies are muckle better."

"Well, countryman," was Neill's response, "I'll see what can be done for you. I'll speak to General Havelock, and bring Colonel Tytler down to look at you tomorrow. You do seem in a bad way. I should think there could not be much diffi-

culty in finding house-room for you somewhere."

"Bedad, Gineral, it's ourselves has forgotten what like the inside av a house is, at all, at all. For mesilf, being born in a mud cabin in Tipperary, that could not be called a house, I don't mind it so much as some av thim illegant Scotch nobility, that miss their mansions and palishes. There's Macnab, now, has a castle at home, ye may be sure."

Mick, who had his leg slung in a bandage, which was fastened round his neck, and had a crutch under his arm, presumed on his old acquaintance with General Neill, who laughed at him good-humouredly.

"Oh ! you are there, are you, my bold dragoon ? Don't you wish you were a staff officer again ? Where's your old chum, Macdonald ?"

“Troth, the sergeant’s in the tint, Gine-ral. I’ll fotch him out.”

The truth is, that Hector, not believing that his old chief was justifiable in his treatment of the insurgents who fell into his hands, and, indeed, feeling some disgust—not to say horror—at the story told him by the staff-sergeant, had slunk inside his tent when Neill came in sight, anxious to avoid the greeting which he thought likely the Ayrshireman would be sure to bestow on him. So he came rather sheepishly at the call of Sullivan, and having saluted with his sound arm, stood at attention.

Neill regarded him with a queer fixed look for some time, and then said,

“Macdonald, I wish to speak with you; will you follow me?”

Hector obeyed, and when the two had got outside, the General turned in his saddle,

and asked : "Macdonald, I should have thought you would have been among the first to greet a man who has been something more to you than a commanding officer. What has gone wrong with you ? "

Neill had a way of probing, or, rather, turning inside out a man's thoughts, which few could resist. Hector stammered a good deal, trying to invent some common-place, Neill's eye all the time fixed on him as if he would read him through and through. As the young fellow looked up and saw the searching glance, he floundered more and more, till at length he drew a long breath, and plainly spoke what was in him. When he had done, he looked up into his officer's face, expecting to see the sparkle of anger in the eye, and the red spot on the cheek. There was neither.

"My lad," said Neill, in a kindly tone,

“I think all the better of you because you have pith of character enough not to think well of me in this matter. But, my lad, you—and I reckon, when the matter gets talked of, a good many more—look only upon one side of the picture. Am I a cruel, a blood-thirsty man? You know better. Am I a Christian? I trust I am.” And here he took his forage cap off. “But,” he resumed, with a heightened colour and a quickened speech, “have you not read in your Bible of one who was promised that he should not bear the sword in vain as the minister of God to execute wrath upon those who have done evil? And have these miscreants not done evil?—the foulest, blackest evil that the heart of devil in human shape could invent? But think not I acted as the minister of wrath only. I had to strike terror with a great example. I had



to terrify—to cow—to tell all India, through that quick bruit which mysteriously rushes from village to village, that for him who hurt a hair of a European there was no mercy on this side the grave. And it added weight to the example if I added to it the conviction that the nature of the punishment annihilated the hope of happiness beyond the grave. I punished no man without a trial. I do not believe that the blood of an innocent man lies at my door. You know Latin. *Silent inter arma leges.* I was the law, and neither before my God nor my fellow-man will I quail at the manner in which I executed it. Think not, Macdonald, of the half-hundred dogs whom I sent to the gallows, and to hell after it, in their esteem and that of their fellows; think on the effect of the example; think that by it Madras and Bombay may have been pre-

served from insurrection ; think on this, that it may have spared the lives of many of your countrymen and countrywomen. My lad, I have said to you what I should not have considered myself called upon to urge to my commanding officer, because I esteem the good opinion of an honest and conscientious man, whether he has sergeant's stripes on his arm, or a general's sword by his side. And now, where were you wounded ?”

Hector told him, and added that he was nearly fit for service again. Neill asked him if he would care for staff employment again, but Hector gratefully refused, and the stern, but just and kindly old officer, cantered off.

In a few days the Highlanders were moved out of their tents, not, however, into the houses Neill had spoken of, but into the stable-sheds which had been occupied by the 2nd Cavalry, before that interesting collec-

tion of rascals thought proper to mutiny. They had been cleared out, and matting laid down, and the ground round them drained. Under these improved sanitary conditions the health of the men rapidly improved, more especially as the natives, gradually emboldened by the order and system which Neill had initiated, and which Havelock carried out, began to come among the troops in considerable numbers, with a better quality and more variety of food than that to which they had hitherto been accustomed. At first there was some little fear of poison, but as the same natives continued to make their appearance from day to day, and were evidently actuated by good faith, or rather anxiety to do trade, the apprehension wore off. It is a curious phenomenon that wherever there are British soldiers there beggars are sure to abound, and although in circumstances so

exceptional, the rule was not violated in this instance. The lines were infested with hordes of dusky low-castes, howling for alms most discordantly. There was one fiendish old woman in particular, whose acquaintance with the English language consisted of two words, which she was never tired of chaunting in a monotonous high key. “Hungry! hungry! soldier!” was the old witch’s constant cry, and she was as vociferous at the end of the day, when her wallet was full of scraps, as she was in the early morning, when it was empty. Some of these beggars proved to be possessed of more gratitude than is usually to be found in the category of mendicant virtues. There was a miserable old deaf and dumb man, who had specially attached himself to the part wherein Hector and Sullivan dwelt. On one occasion, while a man was passing, seemingly a native dealer,

with a basket of something on his arm, this poor fellow clutched Hector by the arm, and pointing to his passing countryman, went through the pantomime of cutting his throat. Hector guessed at his meaning, and went out and collared the sutler, who proved to be a spy. There is no occasion to add that he was hanged the same night.

With returning health and regularity came drills and parades. The Ross-shire Buffs were so much reduced that the original four companies had to be disorganised and re-blended into two. The Grenadiers, besides the fortune of war, and the inroads of disease, lost at the first parade a sergeant and a private. The sergeant was Hector Macdonald, and the private was Mick Sullivan. This loss they sustained in this wise. Ever since he first took the field, the General had felt deeply the want of cavalry. Up to the

time that Cawnpore was reached all his force in this arm had not reached a score of sabres, and although it had been slightly recruited prior to the advance into Oude, it was still a mere handful, and many excellent opportunities of utilising victories had perforce been allowed to run to waste, for want of an efficient detachment of cavalry. Soon after the return to Cawnpore, it was determined to augment the mounted force in some systematic way, and at the first parade all who had ever served in a cavalry regiment were ordered to come to the front. At no time are there many ex-cavalrymen in an infantry force, but perhaps this little army of Havelock's contained exceptionally few. Of what few there were, the majority contained in the heterogeneous "riddlings of creation" of which the Madras Fusiliers were composed, felt a certain diffidence in

declaring themselves, owing to the delicate fact that the cavalry regiments in which they had previously served they had left without leave asked and obtained. In point of fact, they were deserters, and so it came to pass that only some half-dozen answered the call, amongst whom, of course, were Hector and his chum. These two were decidedly the most presentable of the "elegant extracts," and Hector was on the spot constituted sergeant-major, and Mr. Sullivan, who had been a rough-rider in his old cavalry days, was created rough-riding sergeant, with the charge of the manege. Upon these two the duty was further devolved of going through the ranks and picking out the men who appeared to have sufficient acquaintance with a horse to know his head from his tail. The principle which was to guide them was the same as that so popular

among dog-stealers and receivers of stolen goods in general—"No questions asked."

When the parade was dismissed, and the men had returned into the huts, Mr. Sullivan's exultation knew no bounds. He was always a cavalryman at heart, and although he had the gift of accommodating himself to circumstances, and had made himself very happy among the infantrymen into whose ranks he had accompanied his chum, his heart was glad within him that he was to be restored to what, indeed, seemed his natural element, the saddle. And now here he was *per saltum* lifted into a position of honour and dignity—not to say emolument—which was perhaps the only "crib" which, as a private soldier, he had ever longed for. Having disbursed rupees enough to the caterer of the hut to pay for an extensive performance of worship to Bacchus—grog was



always procurable somehow—Mick made a set speech to his “fellow-counthrymen by the grandmother’s side,” in the course of which he ostentatiously opened his tunic, and producing from a breast-pocket a curiously-shaped parcel, unrolled the wrappers of it, and lo! there lay exposed to view a pair of spurs.

“There, my heroic cummerades,” exclaimed he, with a flourish of his treasure—“there are the tools of the thrade of the O’Sullivan; he has onst more got his fut in the shtirrup, and by the piper av Moses he will cut his way to glory or a gory death-bed. When, my Throjans, I abandoned me billet as a staff-offisher for to come amangst yez, along wid me beloved chum—an’ I hae been very happy wid ye, and I’ll always give ye a good name, ye spalpeens—I tuk thim badges av a draghoon aff me heels,

and I rolled thim up as a tindher mother would swaddle hir darling babe, acushla, an' I put thim next me heart, only on the wrong side, which is av no importance to the argument. I said, sez I, Sullivan, sez I, the day may be in the womb av the future that ye may be called upon for to take yer rightful place at the head av a throop, and thin thim spurs will come in handy. That day, me fellow-souldiers, has come ; here are the spurs, like Sullivan himself, up to the front ; and now, as King Hirod said when he had done massacreeing the babbies — ‘ A horse ! a horse ! — me kingdom for a horse ! ’ The force of evints compils me for to wear ammunition high-lows, but I’ll bore a hole in the heels av thim, and wid futsthrops, it’s divil a soul would know them from Wellingtons.”

This interesting ceremony accomplished,

Mr. Sullivan then betook himself to fashion the gold-lace spur which, stitched on the arm, is the emblem of the rough-rider. A temporary difficulty met him, owing to the fact that there was no gold lace to be got hold of, but a native brought him a fragment of one of the scarlet and gold shawls which form the girdles of Eastern grandees, and Mick was satisfied. Then he and Hector sallied out on a recruiting expedition. They picked up a good many men of the Fusiliers who had seen the inside of a cavalry barracks before they reached Warley; and what with fellows who had been grooms before they had enlisted, and men who had been officers' servants, and, therefore, used to riding, they, in the course of a few days, got together a squad which brought up the total strength of Havelock's cavalry, including the little troop previously in existence,

to over one hundred men. Horses were not difficult to obtain, most of which knew more or less of the business of the manege, and Hector and Sullivan at once commenced to drill the squads into which the recruits had been divided, according to proficiency. There was at first a good deal of tendency among some of the fellows under the tuition of the latter, to try the performance known in the army as "taking a rise out of" that gallant non-commissioned officer, whose trifling eccentricities of manner and expression certainly were some temptation to such an interlude to more serious business. But Mr. Sullivan, although he put his dignity in his pocket when off duty, would not bait a jot of it when the exigencies of the service pointed at its enforcement. He surprised one of the jokers by quietly requesting him to dismount and march off between a couple

of men to the quarter-guard, a course of action which led to an interview on the following day between the comic man and a certain officer, the result of which was, on the part of the former, a considerable amount of that involuntary pedestrian exercise known as pack-drill. Thus it came to be known that Sergeant Sullivan was not a man who would stand being played with, and as he confined himself within the limits of the most rigid sobriety, and was really an excellent drill-sergeant, and a capital rough-rider, he rapidly grew in the estimation of his superiors.

## CHAPTER VIII.

MOST of the fellows Mick had to do with were not difficult to manufacture into dragoons, since they had already had, the greater part of them, some experience in horsemanship, and the exigencies of the time did not admit of standing upon niceties as regards position and lightness of hand ; but there were a few, constituting the awkward squad, which were a sore thorn in Sergeant Sullivan's side. This batch had not been selected, but had been forced upon the gatherers together of the cavalry force, upon the principle that a man who can't walk may possibly be able to ride. There

was Will Morison, of the 78th, for instance. He was an ugly, swivel-eyed, knock-kneed, flat-footed slab of a fellow. Before he chose the profession of arms, he had graced with his presence the environs of Dundee, and his flatness of foot and knobbly development of knee-joint, were attributed by his comrades to the alleged circumstance that he had been wont to earn his livelihood by tramping down the oatmeal in the big old-fashioned girnels. Anyhow, Will was a wretchedly bad pedestrian, and his understandings being so large that no ammunition-boots ever built could properly contain them, he was, as regards his nether extremities, generally dilapidated, and sometimes bare-foot altogether. The Sepoys were wont, in the panic of a sudden skedaddle, to leave behind their huge clumsy brogans; and when the 78th were on their track, and an ex-

ceptionally large and ugly shoe was chanced upon, it was usually chucked from company to company on its way to Will Morison. Will was by no means proud, and, after the fashion of the crab with its shell, he would cast the old shoe and put on the new with a supreme indifference to rights and lefts, provided he saw a prospect of getting a step onward to the "ample room and verge enough," for which he was always craving, but which it was impossible he could attain inside anything smaller than a boat. The captain of Will's company conceived the brilliant idea of making a cavalryman of him, and the task of carrying this endeavour into actual operation fell upon the unwilling shoulders of Mr. Sullivan. A certain success, indeed, attended the attempt *ab initio*. Will, once mounted, found it difficult to tumble off, since his enormous feet dangling at the end



of his long legs balanced and weighted him in the saddle ; but further than the certainly essential, but still rudimentary, portion of the art of equitation comprised in being somewhere about the horse's back, and not on the ground, Will could not get, and the bootless trial of trying to make a dragoon of him excited in Sergeant Sullivan much exacerbation of temper, which found what in honest Mick's case may be called its natural vent in language far from strictly Parliamentary.

Hector had double work, since he had to take his share of riding-school drill and also act as sergeant-major ; but his name having been, ever since he joined the force of which Havelock was at the head, a synonym for good character and conduct, his able performance of his new duties was accepted as a matter of course. When the bulk of the

cavalry force had learnt roughly the art of riding, Major Barrow was indefatigable in drilling his little squadron in field movements. Hour after hour in the mornings and evenings he had his fellows out upon the plain, indoctrinating them into some of the simpler cavalry evolutions. As the result, when the time came for renewed action, the force, if it would scarcely have made a distinguished figure at marching past on a parade ground, was fairly serviceable, and it possessed that most essential of all requirements in a body of horse, plenty of dash. The horses on which it was mounted had been gradually collected by the commissariat department, captured from the enemy, casually acquired in the course of marching, or bought from natives who had picked them up straying about in the depopulated country around. Most of them had pre-

viously been troop horses, but they were a queer nondescript set of animals, the leading characteristics of most of them being bone, bad temper, and wiry endurance. On the arrival of Outram the strength of the cavalry was further recruited by about forty irregular horsemen, the remnant of the 12th Native Cavalry, under the command of Lieutenants Johnson and Charles Havelock, the nephew of the General.

Havelock, who had been for some time formally superseded in the supreme command by Sir James Outram, was very eager to recommence the attempt to relieve Lucknow. Early in the morning of the 15th of September there marched into the cantonments a detachment of the 5th Madras Fusiliers, who were received with loud cheering and many handshakes as they formed up for the General to inspect them before they broke

off and looked to getting under cover. The other detachments of the reinforcements were reported close behind, and as it was certain they and General Outram would all arrive in the course of the day, General Havelock issued the general order that the whole force should commence crossing the river at daybreak next morning. But when night came, and with it Outram, in the rear of all the reinforcements, this programme was altered. The new arrivals were placed under canvas on the ground between the stables occupied by the original force and the ruined barracks in and around Wheeler's entrenchments, there being no room for them in the stables and lines. That night was a very jovial one among the soldiery. The warworn men who had fought so many good fights against such fearful odds were glad to welcome the coming of those who

would make the odds not quite so overwhelming. "Townies" found each other by that curious process of intuitive affinity which is one of the social phenomena of soldiering; men who had "lain together" at some station in times gone by recognised each other, and were ready for a gossip about the old days. The new fellows were full of curiosity to hear something of the experiences of the seasoned men who had been through the ordeal already, and the gross outcome of the fraternization was a universal feeling of confidence and cheerfulness, such as had been strange to the original army of Oude for many a day. The beer-can and the grog went merrily round as the men chatted, sang, and laughed, and the very air seemed lighter than heretofore.

Next morning came Outram's famous

order, so full of self-abnegating chivalry, in which he waived his rank, and leaving the command in the hands of Havelock, attached himself to the force in the capacity of a simple volunteer. Men are prone to say that the private soldier has not the capacity to appreciate such an act as this—that such a noble victory over the natural craving after distinction is likely to weigh less with him than an effort of mere animal courage. The charge would never be ventured had the pessimists been in Cawnpore when this order was promulgated. Outram was popular always; the men who had been with him in Persia were never tired of the gallant, simple, manly chief who never asked a man to do what he was not ready to dare himself. But from and after this order he was positively idolised. There never was a grumble at any order of Outram's,

however much hardship it might involve. When the private saluted him it was not the mere mechanical gesture enjoined by the regulations—there was in the recognition a willing homage to the man besides the obedience to the law.

But although Outram had formerly waived his right to command, the stirring influence of his energetic counsels was at once visible. To counteract the sickness which still raged vehemently, and keep the men in good spirits, recourse was had to athletic games, which were carried on upon the plain outside the quarters. Running matches were got up between the champions of companies, followed by rough handicap races. Then there were knapsack races, in which Toomie, the hero of the pugilistic contest previously alluded to, earned extensive kudos and a good slice of prize

money. The 78th men took to their national sports, putting the stone and throwing the hammer, and Allan Stuart and Jock Gibson even managed to diversify the programme by an animated struggle for supremacy at tossing the caber. If the sports had no other effect, they at least gave the men something to talk about, and kept their minds from stagnating—said stagnation being a wondrously favourable condition for disease stepping in to break the monotony with disastrous results.

At length all the preliminaries were settled, and on the morning of the 19th the army began to cross the river by Crommelin's bridge of boats. It was not, numerically speaking, a very formidable force, after all the reinforcements. There was what of "Havelock's Ironsides" war and disease had left, about 250 men, who had come



up by steamer under the command of Colonel Stisted, and Sir James Outram's reinforcements. These consisted of the 90th Regiment, the 5th Madras Fusiliers, the remaining five companies of the 78th under Major M'Intyre, and detachments of the 64th and 84th. Four hundred men were left in the entrenchment to garrison Cawnpore, and the little army that went out to battle had a strength of some 2,500 men, all told.

The enemy made little or no resistance to the crossing of the army. They had, it is true, a couple of guns in position, backed by a few infantrymen, but the 5th Fusiliers drove them back over the ridge of sand-hills. Next day was spent in getting the heavy guns across, and in a reconnaissance by the cavalry. As Sergeant-Major MacDonald rode out on this expedition he passed his old chief, General Neill, sitting

under the shade of a huge white umbrella, and radiant now that he was in command of a brigade, and had the prospect of fighting. The cavalry ascertained that the enemy occupied a strong position about two miles in front of Mungelwar. The night was a dismal one of rain, and the troops were not sorry when the morning came, for although it brought no cessation of the deluge it brought action. The artillery blazed away at the villages around which the enemy had stationed their guns. The latter was speedily silenced, and a general advance of the whole line completed the discomfiture of the enemy, who took to their heels in the abruptest confusion. Then came the word "Cavalry to the front!" Barrow was temporarily succeeded in his command by Sir James Outram himself, who led the long gallop after the retreating Sepoys.

Outram had a curious peculiarity as a cavalryman. He wore a sword, but he never drew it. Armed with a heavy cane, which he was wont to wave about his head in a demonstrative fashion, and occasionally to put to practical use as a baculum, if he chanced to get the opportunity, upon some unfortunate Pandy skulker, he rode a gigantic Australian-bred horse, which had a clumsy, bison-like style of galloping, but withal such a turn of speed that the square-shouldered, compact man upon its back was ever in the fore-front of the rush. Close at his heels came Barrow, reckless in his fixed belief that cavalry could do anything, from breaking a square to storming a fortress. Nor was Hector Macdonald far off, on his vicious little Arab, which, with its sloped ears and wild eye, looked as it were as eager to worry Sepoys as Hector was to sabre

them. Away on the left road Sullivan of the Spurs, every now and then standing up in his stirrups, as his horse plashed through the sheets of shallow water and tore in among the long grass, to see whether the rear of the retreating Sepoy army had yet come almost within reach of that sword which he kept so regimentally at the slope. In loose order the little band galloped on behind their leaders, a man now and then checking his speed to sabre some skulking rascal trying to escape observation by lying close among the long grass. One of these came very near cutting short the thread of this story by slaying Hector Macdonald. Hector had started the fellow out of his form among the grass. The fellow, carrying his firelock at the trail, twisted and doubled like a hare just put up ; but at last Hector ranged up alongside of him, and

raised his sword to cut him down. Life was sweet to the Pandý, and as the bright sabre flashed in the air he threw up his firelock above his head as a guard, holding it as a quarter-staff. Down on its barrel came Hector's sword, with a jar that ran up to his shoulder, and ere he could come to the recover, and follow with a point, the Sepoy had twisted nimbly round, and lo! the muzzle of his piece was within a foot or two of the Scottish lad's head. As the man drew trigger Hector ducked, as better men have done before him, and the bullet went through the curtain of his headpiece. Jack Sepoy had not taken the stock from his shoulder, when with one of the "*long drawing cuts*" for which the riding-master of his old corps had such a predilection, Hector had slashed upwards at his adversary, and cut him almost in two.

“Close up and take order!” was the word of command, as a turn in the road, which was strewn with shoes and arms, abandoned by the fugitives in their panic, brought the little band in sight of a dense mass of the retreating Sepoys. They dashed in upon them at headlong speed, cutting furiously as they pressed onward through the mass, the stick wielded by Outram going to work like a flail. A futile attempt at a rally on the part of the fugitives only entailed upon them fresh slaughter. A little in advance of the roughly-formed line, a colour, fluttering from its staff, borne by a native cavalryman, striving to make his way through the dense throng of pedestrian fugitives, caught the eye of Sergeant Sullivan. He sat down in his saddle, sent the spurs into the flanks of his horse, and went through or over the crowd that intervened between him and the colour.

The evil-eyed, swarthy-faced men around it glared angrily on the excited Irishman as he pressed furiously forward, his reins on his horse's neck, his sword circling about his head, and falling now and again on some wretch, who straightway bit the dust, his left arm outstretched to grasp the colour-staff. The bearer of the standard made strenuous efforts to get clear out of the press, but it was all to no purpose. Sullivan got his grasp on the staff, and with a sudden wrench dragged its holder, whose grip was tenacious, out of the saddle. Mick wanted the colour, but he did not want the man who carried it and clung to it. The method by which he effected a severance was abrupt, but conclusive. To a man who could cut a sheep in two as it hung from the ceiling, it was no feat, with a sheer sweep of his sword, to go through the wrist of the Sepoy trooper as if

it had been a piece of bamboo cane. The obstacle temporarily caused by the stand made by the frantic rearguard of the enemy was overcome by the simple process of cutting down those who offered resistance, and then there was another gallop, "illustrated with cuts," till the little band came close up to Busseeretgunge. Here the enemy were massed in some force, with a couple of field-pieces behind an embankment, and these commenced to play alike on friend and foe, as the British cavalry hove in sight, performing sabre practice on the unfortunate stragglers who had not got under cover of the guns. The fire of a couple of field-pieces was a bagatelle of utter insignificance to stop the victorious horsemen. Barrow saw a chance to afford a demonstration of the correctness of his axiom that cavalry could do anything but play the organ or extinguish a volcano.



Dressing up a semblance of a front rank, and calling on his fellows to ride close, and be careful not to open out, he led them forward at racing pace. Taking his horse hard by the head, he lifted it slap over the earth-work, and dropped on the other side among the gunners who were serving the pieces. The rest got over somehow—some without their horses, some with a tremendous buck-jump, others with an undignified scramble; but enough came in at the heels of Barrow to slay the gunners and capture the guns. Sullivan might have served an apprenticeship to an acrobat, in justification of the dexterous manner in which he turned a complete somersault, and, leaving his horse on its back in the ditch, lighted like a battering-ram in the stomach of the Sepoy No. 1, who was just on the point of applying the lint-stock. Having finally cleared the ground of

Sepoys, the cavalry halted at a little village called Serai, and waited for the coming up of the infantry. It was the afternoon before, sodden with the long-continued rain, the wearied footmen arrived, and the village was taken possession of by the first comers, while the rear had to be content with a comfortless bivouac.

## CHAPTER IX.

IF “water, water, everywhere” could have quenched the zeal of these soldiers, they would have been spiritless enough, for it had hardly left off pouring since the river was crossed, and the country everywhere was like a lake, with a few islands studded over it, and the road crossing its bosom, and barrels keeping above the surface. The second day’s march brought them to the side of the bridge, which, contrary to all expectation, the flying enemy had not destroyed. Toward the conclusion of this day’s march there broke upon the ears of the advancing force the constant booming

of the guns of Lucknow, and the step of the leg-weary and footsore grew brisker at the sound, as the men closed their ranks up mechanically, in obedience to an impulse, as if the battle were imminent. When the halt was made for the night at the village of Bunnee a Royal salute was fired by the artillery, in the hope that the friendly noise should reach to the beleaguered folk in Lucknow. It was taken as some evidence of an altered feeling on the part of the non-military natives that in a good many of the villages through which the march lay the women were found in their houses, and manifested no trepidation as the British force marched in. The orders were very strict against molesting any of these—the original edict being still in force, that any man guilty of rapine would be hanged in his uniform. The appearance of the village of Bunnee

favoured the notion that it had been fallen upon at unawares. The fires were burning on the hearths and the cakes cooking by them for the suppers of the weavers, who formed its principal population. The men, indeed, had fled, leaving their webs still in their clumsy looms ; but the women remained, and the cavalry which was in the advance ate the cakes that were thus ready to their hands.

Next day's march was more eventful than the two previous days. The cavalry led the advance, Sergeant Sullivan, with a few privates, forming the extreme advance guard. For the first dozen miles of the march Mick saw nothing of an enemy save a few skulking cavalrymen. He began to indulge seriously the expectation that he might be the first man into Lucknow, for the story promulgated by treacherous spies was current that

the enemy were utterly disheartened, and would venture to make no stand. Before the day was over honest Mick discovered how wildly sanguine he had been. As the road topped a very slight eminence, the beautiful grounds of the Alumbagh, with its splendid palace and park-like environs, met the eye of the advanced guard. The scenery was charming in the extreme; but there was another sight which interfered with the tranquil enjoyment of its beauties. Across the immediate front, their centre on high ground, their left resting on the Alumbagh, and their right on a swamp, extended the long line of the enemy's defence. Tytler came tearing up at a gallop, in answer to a signal from Mick, and his practised eye told him there were more than 12,000 men collected to oppose the advance. The main body was halted in the rear, and as the

enemy had got the range of the cavalry with a couple of guns, which sent their balls ricochetting down the road, Tytler withdrew the horsemen, and orders were issued for the guns to come to the front. As this change of position was taking place a curious circumstance occurred, showing to what shifts of trickery the enemy were fain to resort, and how requisite was promptitude to foil their wiles. Lieutenant Johnson's handful of irregulars wore a red scarf over the blue tunic, to distinguish them from the insurgent cavalry, whose uniform was identical. Like the old border moss-troopers, these irregulars could go where it seemed impossible for a horse to keep above the surface much less to gallop, and they hovered around the advance in an independant and fortuitous sort of way, turning up sometimes in places where they were least expected.

As the volunteer cavalry were in retreat, there became visible a little band of horsemen away on the right front, with the red scarf over their shoulders, and riding toward the gun of which Mr. Crump had charge, with all the seeming confidence of friends. It was a critical moment, for the dilemma lay between losing the gun and firing upon men who might be friendly. Mr. Crump took a long wistful look at the advancing horsemen, and made his mind up. The gun was unlimbered and its muzzle pointed toward them, and, still beckoning excitedly, they continued to advance. In another minute a round shot had slain two of the foremost, and proved an effective touchstone of the characters of the rest. Their backs suddenly became revealed to view as they went about, each man on his own account, and galloped furiously out



of range of Mr. Crump's very practical test.

By this time the plan of attack had been determined on. The 2nd brigade was brought to the front, and then pushed away through the swamps on our left front, to turn the enemy's right flank. The heavy guns came up rapidly to cover this movement, just as the enemy commenced a plunging fire from some guns which were previously masked in some topes in advance of their position. Olphert's horse battery, with the volunteer cavalry in front of it, dashed past the halted 1st brigade, which cheered loudly as they passed, old Neill himself waving his helmet, and leading the cheering. When the time came to leave the road and take the ground to the left a great ditch or nullah full of water impeded the passage. Led by Barrow and Hector Macdonald, the cavalry plunged in reckless-

ly and scrambled through, their horses showing an agility worthy of goats. But it was a far more serious effort for the horse artillery, and the cavalry halted to watch how Olpherts would overcome the difficulty. He did it in a characteristic way—acting up to his nickname of “Mad Jack.” His men were as reckless as himself, and without ever drawing rein the guns were galloped into the deep nullah. In a moment it seemed as if all were chaos—there was a wild medley of horsemen, drivers and guns, struggling horses and splashing water, and then somehow out came the guns at the other side, nobody the worse for the scramble, and only eager to obey “Mad Jack’s” stentorian cry, “Forward at the gallop!” On the left all the fighting was done in water nearly knee deep, and the enemy, unable to withstand the impetuosity of the

attack, began to give ground. The centre and the right of the enemy, where a couple of guns, having been got inside the Alum-bagh, and were blazing away furiously, were more difficult to vanquish. One gun was planted on the road right in the centre of the position, and the fire from it was very galling. Young Johnson, with about a dozen of his irregular cavalry, was on the extreme right of the volunteers, close to the road, and the shot from this gun bowled over one or two of his men. Jack Johnson was a rough-and-ready style of fellow, of a very practical turn of mind. It appeared to him a plausible proposition that if all the gunners were killed the unpleasant discharges of the gun would be stopped, and he set himself to prove the soundness of his reasoning. With his handful of irregulars at his back he galloped off up the road, far

in advance of any possible support. He cut his way through all opposition, straight to the obnoxious gun, sabred the Oude men who were working it, and pitched the ammunition into the ditch. It was out of the question to stop there till supports came up, for there was plenty of cover all round, out of which the Sepoy marksmen were leisurely taking pot shots at him and his little band. So he sent the gun into the ditch after the ammunition, and cantered quietly back along the road till he met the main body in the advance. There was no pluckier action in all this campaign.

The guns in the Alumbagh were silenced, and the artillerymen who were working them were attacked in force by a wing of the 5th Fusiliers. But when the Madras men got inside the walls, they found that they had been forestalled. Captain Jack Burton, of the

78th, had seen an opening as his company was pressing on to the front. "Follow me, a lot of ye!" was Jack's abrupt order, and away he went at a tangent to the right. The great compound of the Alumbagh had a gateway in the wall about the centre of the face looking toward Cawnpore, and for this gateway, keeping close under the shelter of the wall, gallant Jack Burton made, acting on his own discretion. After a brief set-to between his followers and the defenders of the gate, it was carried, and the Highlanders, once inside, came on at the double, and took at unawares the men who were serving the guns. The artillerymen and their supports disregarded the further serving of the guns to turn upon this unexpected enemy, and while the strife was yet in doubt, the men of the 5th Fusiliers came streaming through the embrasures,

and clinched the victory which the handful of Highlanders had already but half achieved. And so the important position of the Alum-bagh fell into the hands of the British. The rebels were in full, although rather slow, retreat, when it struck Outram that it might have a good moral effect to expedite their progress. He put his big Australian into his long stride again, and came lumbering up to the cavalry, who were hanging on the skirts of the fugitive Sepoys. Hurriedly getting them into some order, he organised a regular chase, and it seemed likely that Lucknow would, after all, be relieved that night by the handful of energetic horsemen. But as the foremost of them came galloping up the road which leads to the Charbagh Bridge, an unexpected obstacle stopped further progress. A great trench had been dug across the road. This had been board-

ed over for the passage of the native troops, and when the runaways had passed over, the planks had been hurriedly drawn over, leaving the yawning gap an insuperable obstacle to any further progress. There was nothing to be done but to retreat, for either side of the road was lined by loop-holed houses, so that there was no opening for a divergence. As the horsemen rode back to the main body, which had massed together, and was still under arms, a despatch was placed into Outram's hands. His face flushed all over with pleasure as he read, and then he galloped off to Havelock to tell him the joyous tidings; and presently the regimental officers got the order to form their men up into as close a semblance to a hollow square as the configuration of the ground and the exigencies of the moment admitted of. The rain, which had left them

for that day hitherto, began to come down in a torrent just as Outram rode inside this square, but regardless of it, he bared his head as he read, in a loud and ringing voice, the glad news that Delhi had been assaulted on the 14th, and that most of the city had already reverted to British hands. The cheering was so loud that it might almost have reached the beleaguered garrison in the Residency, and it certainly astonished the enemy, who at once commenced a hot fire from a number of guns which were posted at intervals among the gardens lying south of the Charbagh Bridge. It was a wretched night that the wearied men spent in the position under the walls enclosing the compound of the Alumbagh. No tents had come up, no food was forthcoming, but the bearers of the grog had been expeditious, and this modicum of consolation was



not wanting. Neill knew of what effect was a dram when men were wet and hungry, and it was to his suggestion that the troops owed the extra caulker that was served out to them this night.

All through the watches of the dreary night the foe kept plying the British position with their artillery—chiefly directing their fire against the enclosure of the Alumbagh, where had been concentrated the sick and wounded. In the morning it grew heavier, telling so severely upon the force that it was withdrawn backward for a considerable distance, causing much confusion in the rear. Patrols of the volunteer cavalry had been told off to keep the road clear and expedite the removal of the baggage, which had just come up, into the enclosure of the Alumbagh. Hector Macdonald was in charge of one of these parties, and had his men

stationed at intervals along the road, keeping the bullock drivers from creating blocks by striving to pass each other. The baggage-guard was chiefly composed of the 90th, but there were detachments from all the regiments, and Mr. Crowe, of the 78th, was in charge of the party from that corps. Hector recognised his old colour-sergeant, the burly Christy, and was walking his horse alongside of the sturdy Nairn man, when a sudden clamour, followed by a wild panic of confusion, broke in upon their conversation. The two non-commissioned officers looked to the right rear, whence proceeded the din, and lo ! down upon them were galloping a squadron of blue-clad horsemen. The men of the 90th raised the cry that they were our own men, and refused to be undeceived till some of them had been convinced of their error by the argument of cold steel.

Nor were the officers more prompt at the recognition of the emergency. But Colour-Sergeant Christy was a good soldier, and a man of ready action. In reply to the cry "It's our own men!" he rapped out a volley of oaths particularly disparaging to the imbeciles who held that opinion, and rushing out to the open space on the right, roared, with another grisly oath, "Form a rallying square round me!" Whether he was right or not was speedily proved. A little posse of prisoners were on the inside flank, guarded by a detachment of the 84th Regiment, and when the advancing cavalry set about cutting down the guard, and with loud shouts setting free the prisoners, there could be no question as to their character. The big sergeant, with his loud voice and his upraised arm, was a man of mark. The 78th men came around him like one man,

others from divers regiments followed the example, and by the time the Pandy cavalry, flushed with their partial triumph over the incautious men further in the rear, had got upon the little plateau whereupon Christy's "rallying square" had been hurriedly drawn up, the latter was ready to give them a warm reception. Others, unable to gain the square, jumped hastily into the water on the other side of the road, and, having waded in up to their middles, commenced firing in this somewhat original skirmishing position. The flushed troopers came on to all appearance full of resolution, but a volley or two brought them abruptly to a halt, and by the time that Neill, with a couple of guns and the bulk of the volunteer cavalry came galloping on to the scene, the redoubtable horsemen had already begun to steal away out of rifle range. A charge of the

volunteers completed their discomfiture, and they were no more troublesome all that day, although bodies of them continued visible in the "offing," waving a great green flag out of bravado. They must have emerged from the town early in the morning, and skirted along by the Jellalabad road, and, taking advantage of the trees and crops, gained our rear unobserved.

This skirmish over, the tents were pitched, and the men at length had the opportunity of taking a late breakfast. But there was little rest for the cavalry, who were employed in scouting in all directions. And to a heavy fatigue party of the 78th, covered by a detachment of the cavalry, fell one of the most dangerous slices of work in all the campaign. The trench across the road had to be filled up before any advance could be made to the Charbagh Bridge, and not one,

but all of the enemy's guns commanded this point at almost point-blank range. Burton was in command of the party, and the daring fellow stood coolly on the brink of the trench all the time his men were at work, a mark for the enemy's guns. Although careless of himself, he took all possible precautions to protect his men as much as possible. There was a bungalow on the right of the road, under cover of the wall of which he ordered the cavalrymen, and half his own fellows, the other half being at work. Sitting here in the saddle, Hector Macdonald saw the well-aimed shot and shell come bowling right into the heart of the fatigue party, causing fearful havoc. Sergeant Chevalier had both his legs carried off, and died upon the spot. One of the most fearful wounds, although not an immediately fatal one, was that inflicted on

Kenneth Macross, a fellow of the Grenadiers. Kenneth was stooping over a spadeful of clay, when a shell hit him on the back, and, exploding instantaneously, almost tore the back-bone out of the poor fellow, who, strange to say, yet survived this frightful mutilation till nightfall. Glad enough were the survivors of the party on whom devolved this desperate service when the gully was levelled, and when Burton, who seemed to bear a charmed life (the charm was not a lasting one), gave the word to retire from so warm a position.

## CHAPTER X.

ALL that day the cannonade from the guns on the Charbagh Bridge continued without intermission, nor was it desisted from during the watches of the night. But, wearied with long marching, and looking forward to serious work next day, the men slept as soundly as if the half-spent balls were not ricochetting among the tents. One augury of the morning at least was propitious—the weather, hitherto so rainy, was now fair, if somewhat gloomy. A good breakfast was leisurely partaken of, and at eight o'clock the muster was proceeding. There might have been some skulking on



this morning had men so listed. It had been arranged to send the soldiers whom the rapid marching had rendered footsore inside the enclosure of the Alumbagh, along with the wounded. To discover such, however, was no easy task. The sergeants of companies were shouting, "Fall out, all you men that are footsore or unwell!"—but many of them added the taunt, "and all you fellows whose heart isn't good, as well." Whosoever heard this, were he ever so stiff and footsore, took his place with his comrades in the ranks, if he could hobble at all. It happened that more men were left behind than was originally intended, notwithstanding this enthusiasm, but this arose from a confusion in the withdrawal of the outlying pickets to the rear, and not from the multitude of candidates for taking it easy when comrades were fighting.

Between eight and nine came the order to advance, and it was obeyed with a cheer. Neill and the 1st brigade was in front, and Hector Macdonald saw his old chief, with helmet in hand, bowing to the cheering Fusiliers as they filed past him, and then galloping off to overtake the head of the column. It was not a column long. Before it had gone far along the narrow road, branched over with spreading trees, it was a confused mass of guns, bullocks, and soldiery. All along the bend before the straight was reached leading on to the Charbagh Bridge, the head of the force was exposed to a pitiless storm of round shot and musketry, which cut the men down in sections, and by killing the bullocks impeded the advance of the artillery. Outram went off to the right with the Highlanders, intending to strike the road

again at the bridge, but the warmest of the fighting was over before he accomplished his purpose. A couple of Maude's guns were got up to the front, and, posted in the open road, were busily plied to silence the fire of the enemy's battery on the bridge. But guns cannot be fired without artillerymen, and although Maude himself and Lieutenant Maitland escaped miraculously, the greater part of their command was placed *hors de combat*. Volunteers from the pent-up mass behind the guns rushed forward to work the guns, but it was a scene of almost pure butchery. The shot from the bridge battery, passing Maude's pieces, tore through the crowd on the road, leaving lanes of dead and wounded behind them as they passed. Then the garden walls of the Charbagh on the right were loop-holed all along, and the enemy's sharp-shooters

posted thereat, kept up a hot and unremitting fire of musketry on the mass of men in the avenue. Infantrymen saved themselves in some degree by lying down, but for horsemen there was no such recourse. Surgeon Wilcox, of the 78th, who had not been able to accompany his regiment when it went off under Havelock, at this juncture took an odd but effectual plan of stopping up one of these loop-holes. He reined his horse backward so that its quarters fairly blocked up the orifice, and there "Heather Jock," as he was called, sat patiently, receiving shot into the body of his steed, until a prod of a bayonet raised the phlegmatic disposition of that animal. All of a sudden the cry of "Forward!" came back among the mass. Out to the front, among the smoke of the guns, Hector, who had got separated from his own detachment, saw Neill gesticu-

lating frantically. Then there was a “hurrah!” and a sudden rush forward of the crowd in a packed mass—then a sudden belch of shot right in the teeth of the foremost, followed by an involuntary recoil. A single voice far to the front was heard shouting for men to “come on,” and then there was another rush, and this time not in vain. That bridge was a fearful scene as Hector passed it, having got up nearer the front, so as to be among the Madras Fusiliers. It was littered with men dead and dying. By the side of the parapet, dragged hastily out of the path, lay poor young Arnold, shot through both legs. Tytler was leaning over the parapet, pale and sick with the shock of his falling horse. A hackery, laden with ammunition, had broken down just on the crown of the bridge, impeding the passage greatly; and on the parapet stood young

Havelock, bareheaded, a streak or two of blood on his handsome young face, shouting at the stream of men as it passed him to aid him in throwing into the canal the shot with which the broken-down hackery was laden. That parapet, although not quite so dangerous a position as it had been a few minutes before, when the bridge was swept by shot, was still far from an elysium of safety. The bullets came dropping on it from the rear of the already captured battery, and found a billet here and there. One of them struck Sergeant Macdonald's horse full in the forehead, killing him on the spot. But Hector was luckier than poor Gollacher, one of his brother volunteer cavalrymen. Gollacher's horse was shot in the eye, and, rearing straight on end, went over the parapet with a bound, carrying its rider into the bloody waters of the

canal. He was never heard of more.

While Hector was picking himself up, having disengaged his limbs from his dead horse, the first men of the Highlanders, who had just struck the road after their detour, came doubling across the bridge. Mr. M'Pherson saw the dismounted cavalryman, and cheerily bade him fall in with his old comrades. There was little option, while the temptation was unquestionably strong to a man with fighting impulses—for Hector knew right well that wherever the hardest blows were going the Highlanders were sure to be not far off. So he gripped a rifle which had fallen from the hands of a dead Fusilier, and took his place alongside the burly Colour-Sergeant Christy.

When the 78th had crossed the bridge, they did not diverge to the right along the bank of the canal, as had done those who

preceded them. The straight road known by the name of the Cawnpore Road, which leads direct from the Charbagh Bridge to the Residency, lay in front of them, its level surface broken by the earthwork that had protected the now captured guns. The order was for the Highlanders to occupy the hither end of this road, and make their stand good there till such time as everything had passed clean over the bridge, when they were to follow as a rear-guard. For a while they were unmolested, and employed the period of leisure in throwing into the canal the six guns which had composed the battery that had done so much execution by playing on our advance up to, and across, the bridge. But by-and-by, when the long line of followers was tediously defiling over the bridge, the enemy, who had been massing in force some distance up the road, came



at the Highlanders in great force, yelling like demons. There was no fiercer fight in all this campaign than that maintained here for three mortal hours by the unsupported 78th against an overwhelming force. There was a Sammy-house about a hundred yards up the road, into which a number of the Sepoys dodged, and from it kept up a hot fire upon the Highlanders, galled as they were, besides, by musketry on the right and left. The Sammy-house had to be taken, there was no question about that ; and there was little question who was to take it. Captain Hastings sprang out to the front, waving his sword and calling for volunteers. Herbert M'Pherson was on one side of him in a twinkling, gallant Webster on the other ; Hector Macdonald, Christy, and a score of others, were hardly a step behind. Up the road they dashed, followed by half the regi-

ment. The Sepoys did not get a chance to bolt out of the Sammy-house, and a desperate hand-to-hand fight ensued inside and around it. Beaten back at all points in the open, the fellows inside fought with the madness of despair. But it was only a question of time, and no long time either. Out of windows and over parapets came Sepoys, dead and alive—the live ones, as they lit on the ground, being slain instantaneously by the keen bayonets of the Scotsmen. As Hector Macdonald, breathless and bloody, came outside the Sammy-house, when the work inside it was concluded, he chanced upon a man of the name of Bishop. This Bishop was, perhaps, the worst soldier in the regiment, and Captain Hastings frequently had occasion to punish him, in return for which Bishop was known to nourish a deadly enmity against his officer.

When seen by Hector, he had his rifle at his shoulder, and was quietly covering the captain, who, on the roof of the house, was summarily clearing out the last remnant of its previous inmates. Hector saw the situation at a glance.

“What the devil are you doing?” he shouted breathlessly, as he rushed towards Bishop.

“What’s that to do with you?” growled the dog, without dropping his rifle.

Hector was just in time to strike up the muzzle of the piece as the charge belched forth, harmlessly going high in the air. But other rifles were being fired just then besides that of Bishop. Just as that disgrace to the service had pulled trigger, a stray shot struck him between the eyes, and, with a gruesome howl, he fell dead at Hector’s feet.

Stubbornly was this advanced post held, and as stubbornly was it contested, for more than an hour. At length the enemy, unable to make any impression upon the indomitable Highlanders, brought other weapons into play. Dragged by a horde of Pandies, three brass guns were brought from somewhere on to the road, and a hot fire from these was at once opened upon the 78th. They bore it for a time, compelled to keep within the shelter of the houses for the want of ammunition; for the long-continued wet had swelled their cartridges so that they could not be got into the muzzles of the rifles. But young Havelock, who was working like a score of men, in getting all safe over the bridge, opportunely sent them up a fresh supply, and then it was thought time to try to give a satisfactory account of the brass ordnance which was so impudently and

annoyingly close to them. Lieutenant Webster was the man that suggested a raid upon them.

The great fellow, stepping out into the open, rapped out one of those expressions to which he was rather prone, and shouted, "Who's for these infernal guns?"

From every throat came the answering shout,

"I'm for the guns!"

And a headlong rush was made, headed considerably in advance by the brawny Webster. Armed with a cavalry sabre (he despised the regulation "spit") he made it whistle round his head as he ranged up alongside the guns, and brought it down upon the head of an artilleryman just in time to prevent his firing. When the skirmish was over, the body of this man attracted some notice from the terrific nature

of the wound inflicted by the stalwart arm of Webster. The gunner was cut down almost to the collar-bone with a straight-down cut that betokened tremendous strength of arm. Poor Webster ! the strong arm was soon to become powerless. Before night-fall he was lying on his face near the Bailey-guard gate, a bullet through his head. He got but little of a funeral, poor fellow, buried as he was, he and two more who fell at the same place, in the rubbish by the roadside. It may be taken as an evidence of the horrible barbarity which characterised this struggle that when the bodies of Webster and his companions came to be buried, they were found to be headless. The heads were found some days after in a basket in one of the upper rooms of a neighbouring house.

But to return to the fight for the brass

guns, which, although fierce, did not last long. Once our fellows were fairly inside the guns they made short work with the Pandies. M'Pherson headed a last charge upon them as they retreated, and for the first time for nearly three hours the Highlanders rested unassailed by a hostile fire. But they had not won the victory without scaith, as the wallet of Assistant-Surgeon Valentine M'Master had reason to know. This most combative non-combatant had been remarkably near the hottest part of the fray all along, now bandaging a wound with as much coolness, under a heavy fire, as if he had been by an hospital fireside, anon, when work in his own particular department slackened for a spell, pouching his bandages and sticking-plaister, and trying his hand for variety's sake at making wounds instead of healing them. Presently he was to be seen

converting himself into an amateur field ambulance. With a wounded man pick-a-back he would scuttle into the Sammy-house which he had made into a sort of temporary hospital, and again he would be in the very fore-front of the battle, again bandaging, fighting, or "pack-muling," as he called it, all with the same imperturbable *sang-froid*.

The guns taken, and the enemy chased out of court, the question came up how the trophies of war were to be disposed of. It was settled off-hand by the men themselves. The ropes by which the Sepoys had dragged the brass pieces into position were still attached to them, and the Highlanders yoked on to them, and having formed a triumphal procession, with Piper Campbell playing at their head, the guns were dragged down to the canal and hurled into its waters with a shout of triumph. With that shout there



mingled the crash of a volley of musketry. The irrepressible Sepoys had gained fresh boldness, and were again on the skirts of the Highlanders; but these were ready for them, and maintained the end of the road with indomitable courage, till young Havelock, having got the last waggon over, gave the order for the Highlanders to quit a position they had fought so desperately to maintain, and to follow in the rear of the baggage. The words were hardly out of the daring young officer's mouth when he fell, shot through the arm. There was considerable delay at this point, while M'Master bound up the arm of the General's son, and packed his senseless form inside a doolie; and then at length and last, the Highlanders, cut off from all communication with the main body, and acting, therefore, as a totally independent force, started on the rough,

narrow road up which they had seen the last waggon disappear.

It was not long before they lost their way. They followed the track of the main body along the canal side till they reached some brick-kilns. In front of them was a blazing bungalow. The enemy was here in some force, and there were two roads. In ignorance which way the advance had gone, the 78th, with a blunt directness of purpose, took the way that they knew to be nearest, careless whether or no it was the more arduous. They turned off to the left up a narrow and rather tortuous street, along the course of which every house was loop-holed. A deadly fire rained down upon them all the way, under which they suffered severely; but, irate at the idea that they would be the fag-end of the relieving force, they pressed on with all the speed they could

compass. While battling their devious way along this fearful thoroughfare, Ensign Kerby, who carried the Queen's colour of the regiment, was shot down, and in the disorganisation which prevailed the colour was momentarily left to chance custody. It was gripped as Kerby fell by a bandsman, named Glen, from Glasgow, who carried it a few paces. But Sergeant Reid took it from him, in dire dismay that the Queen's colour should have fallen, even for the moment into custody good enough in itself, no doubt, but not seemly while there was a man to the fore above the rank of private. Reid in his turn was speedily relieved of the colour, for, there being no ensign at hand, Sergeant M'Master, who, as has just been said, was of a versatile temperament, laid hold of it, and carried it all the way into the Residency.

## CHAPTER XI.

THE most reliable guide that the Highlanders had while pressing through this infernal defile consisted in the interminable din of firing which they heard on their right and right front. It was not the rattle of musketry alone that they heard—that noise was so constant and so close to them on their own path that it might have passed unobserved at a distance, but there was the deep-throated music of the big guns to tell them that their comrades of the advance, if they were conquering at all, were not achieving an uncontested victory. Somehow, the Highlanders appeared to be gaining on, nay,

overlapping, the scene where from the din of the guns the fray was evidently warmest. At length the head of the little column emerged upon an open space in which were careering wildly about a number of riderless cavalry horses. Pressing through this space, which was bounded on the reverse side by the Kaiserbagh, they reached the square into which the gate of that edifice opens, and were actually on the flank of an entrenched battery that was sweeping the whole position. Without a moment's hesitation the Highlanders dashed in and took it, spiking the largest of the guns of which it was comprised ; and then they had leisure to look about them. To their amazement they found that by the shorter route into which they had diverged at the limekilns (a route which had been deemed impracticable for the main body) they had actually now

become the advanced instead of the rear guard. Evidences were not wanting of the fatal results of the fire from the battery the Highlanders had just taken, and from the surrounding houses and mosques. The line of fire intersected the line of march, which lay open for nearly two hundred yards, and the dead and wounded were strewed all along its course. The 1st brigade had filed up a narrow lane, cumbered with the big guns, and continually annoyed by a dropping fire from the houses. In an open space which formed part of the environs of the Kaiserbagh a number of maddened native cavalry horses were galloping about, some of them wounded, and all rendered frantic by the continual firing. Pressing through the horses and the fire, the Highlanders debouched into a large court of one of the numerous palaces, a spot which was

at least partially protected from the storm of Sepoy bullets, which raged furiously everywhere else. Here were the chiefs of the little army. On his big Australian sat Outram, a splash of blood across his face and his arm bound up in a sling. Havelock, dismounted, was walking up and down by Outram's side, with short, nervous strides, halting now and then to give emphasis to their argument—for the debate between the two Generals seemed warm. All around them were officers, and outside of this inner circle were soldiers, guns, natives, wounded men, and bullocks, and a surging tide of disorganization was momentarily pouring into the square.

At length the palaver or council of war, or whatever it might be termed, was over. Havelock's mounted staff officers took their orders and galloped off. The Highlanders

went about as they stood, the regiment of Sikhs fell in behind them, and Havelock and Outram, with a couple of staff officers, came out to the new front. The word "Forward!" was given, and the head of the column emerged from out of the shelter, and having traversed that square which afterwards bore for a dread reason the name of "Doolie Square," made on up a narrow street that led with several sinuosities to the Residency. The fire hitherto had been a bagatelle to that which now assailed the advancing party. From side streets, from the front, from the top of every house, there poured a constant stream of bullets upon the men doggedly pushing forward, surly in the inability to return evil for evil. For except where now and then a section got a chance to send a volley into the mass at the head of a cross street, there was no



opportunity of retaliation. The Sepoys, ensconced on the flat roofs of the houses, fired down into the street, and then drew back behind their parapets to load and then discharge. The very women, in the passion of their hostility, plied muskets some of them, others, either not having or not knowing how to use the deadlier weapon, hurled over stones and pieces of furniture where the narrowness of the street afforded a prospect that such weapons would tell. One woman, standing on the parapet of a house with a child in her arms, disdaining in the madness of her wrath to seek cover, yelled and hissed Hindoo curses at the hated white men, till, having lashed herself into an ungovernable fury, she hurled her baby down upon the bristling bayonet points. The Highlanders harmed her not, but the Sikhs who followed them were of a more practical

turn of mind, and the wretched woman, pierced with half-a-dozen bullets, fell on the roadway with a wild shriek. It was in this deadly gorge that the gallant Webster fell, grasping that heavy cavalry sabre of his to the last, which the tactics of the foe gave him no opportunity to use as he knew right well how to use it. At Hector Macdonald's left hand there was marching a man named M'Grath, as dare-devil a rascal as ever fixed bayonet. A downward shot crashed through M'Grath's back, and he fell. But he was not wounded so sore but that, on hands and knees, he could crawl all along by the side of the column, and he actually progressed in this way nearly a hundred yards, till a second bullet knocked the life clean out of him. Nor was there wanting an instance of courage more heroic and self-abnegating than the most daring efforts of

man against man. There were in the Highland regiment a couple of Irishmen, named respectively Glandell and M'Donough. Perhaps from the measure of isolation which was their lot as Irishmen and Catholics in the midst of Scotsmen and Presbyterians, these two men were inseparable companions, sworn brothers in a quiet, undemonstrative way. In this street of death M'Donough's leg was smashed by a Sepoy bullet. He fell, but he was not allowed to lie to be made a mark of by the fiends on the roofs of the buildings. His stalwart chum stooped down, and raising him with difficulty, took the wounded and fainting man upon his back, and pressed forward with his heavy burden. Nor did that reduce him to the position of a non-combatant, although it might well be imagined that a man with another man on his back was hardly in

trim for fighting. But Paddy Glandell was a fellow of resource. When a pinch came where his rifle seemed likely to be of service, he tenderly deposited his chum upon his sound leg, propping him erect against some wall, and then he went to work, loading and firing, till the neck of the obstacle was broken, when he would pick up his comrade again and stagger cheerily onward as before. It may be pleasant to note that the pair managed to reach the Residency without further skaith, although hospital gangrene had its way afterwards with the wounded member of the confederacy, and Glandell, after all his efforts, lost his chum. And now from the staff officers in front, backward through the toiling throng, there runs, with an electric unanimity, a triumphant British shout; for through the fast darkening twilight are visible the towers and arch-

way of the Bailey-guard Gate, and from these towers there comes back an answering shout of glad welcome. Ay, and through the hoarse bass of that last shout from many throats there is audible a shriller treble, that tells the struggling men outside that their countrywomen, too, are cheering them in the advance. A dozen rapid strides more, and the head of the column is at the gate. But it is a gate only in name. To enable it to withstand the attacks of the enemy the earth has been piled up against it from the inside, and there is "no thoroughfare" through it. But there is an embrasure a little to the left, through which the muzzle of a gun is lowering surlily. The cannon is drawn back. Outram is at the embrasure, but he cannot get his horse to take the rough ascent that leads up to it. There is a scramble and a shout among the foremost

of the Highlanders, and Outram, horse and all, go inside, lifted bodily on to the lip of the embrasure by stalwart arms. Havelock follows, then the staff, and then at last through the breach rush the men of the ranks, powder begrimed, dusty, bloody; but a minute before raging with the stern passion of the battle, now full of womanlike tenderness.

All around them, as they swarmed in at the embrasure, there crowded a mass of folks eager to give welcome. There were officers and men of the garrison, there were women, too, weeping tears of joy down on the faces of the children for whom they had not dared to hope for aught but death. There were gaunt men, pale with loss of blood, whose great eyes shone weirdly amid the torchlight, and whose thin hands trembled with weakness as they gripped the

sinewy, grimy hands of the Highlanders. These were the wounded of the long siege, who had crawled forth, as many of them as could compass locomotion of any kind, to bid a welcome to their deliverers. The hearts of the impulsive Highlanders were in their mouths. They, with the memories of the dreadful plight of the Cawnpore garrison fresh among them, had got at the idea somehow that it would be almost a miracle to see any of the Lucknow beleaguered alive, and their pleasurable excitement was all the stronger to find that things were not nearly so bad as they had expected. As they grasped the hands that were held out to them, they shouted "God bless you!" "Why, we expected to have found only your bones," "And the children are living too!" and many other fervid if somewhat incoherent ejaculations. In front of Dr. Fayrer's

house, into which the Generals had entered, the excitement became absolutely painful. The ladies of the garrison came among the Highlanders, shaking them fervently by the hands. The children clasped the shaggy men round the neck, and, to say truth, so did some of the mothers. But, after all, the soldiers' wives proved themselves more practical than did the ladies. They brought out their teapots and their coffeepots, and those of them who had a drop in the bottle brought out the bottle too, and the weary men drank and were refreshed. Among them came, as well as the women, the men of the garrison ; nor were some of the latter entirely disinterested in their profuse fraternization. The men of the 32nd, in particular, developed an eager anxiety to "cadge" as much tobacco as they could from the Highlanders. The latter, in the flush of their enthusiasm, would



have parted with aught belonging to them, and they “bled” freely of the tobacco which they happened to have about them. Subsequent circumstances caused them to repent of their free-handedness, when they had, a few days afterwards, to buy back their own tobacco from the astute gentlemen of the 32nd, at the rate of two shillings a pipeful. This little pettifogging episode created a coolness between the 78th and the other corps, which lasted long after the memory of the specific cause had died out of general remembrance.

While the Highlanders were thus fraternizing with the garrison, the portion of the column which accompanied the guns came in through the now opened Bailey-guard Gate. An accident, which was a lucky one for it, had diverted it from following the line of street along which the Highlanders had

had to fight with such desperation. Several deep trenches interposed just where the narrow street commenced, and Captain Moorsom, who had the complete chart of the place in his head, had led them aside, by a comparatively sheltered way, through the Chutter Munzil and Furhut Buksh Palaces, leading by Paaen Bagh. The gun which formed the enemy's Clock Tower battery was taken in reverse, and the Residency was reached in comparative safety. Yet not without a fight between friends, arising from a mistake in the increasing darkness. Burly Jock Aitken, whose post of honour and of danger was the Bailey-guard, had sallied out with a few of his men to assist the progress of the head of the column. At the Clock Tower this little band, which was composed of Sepoys, came into contact with the advance, who were hardly in a humour to ask gentle-

men of colour for their cards. Before it was discovered that the Sepoys were friends three of them had been bayonnetted.

Deat beat with the day's work, the Highlanders were soon off looking out for sleeping quarters. The pipers were not at liberty to do so so soon as their fellows, as they were ordered to play round the tables at which the Generals and the heads of the garrison supped together. Nobody was fastidious on the score of accommodation on the night after such a day. Hector Macdonald waited till the cavalry came in, that he might see or get tidings of his chum, Sergeant Sullivan, from whom he had been separated since the commencement of the day's fighting; but when the little body of horsemen came in the Irishman was not among them. He had not fallen, however, so far as anybody knew. The last that had been

seen of him was at the Motee Mahal, where he had detached himself from his comrades to escort into shelter a couple of doolies containing wounded officers—a duty from which he had never come back. But since it appeared that the 90th was in the Mahal, and might spend the night there, there was no reason to entertain any serious apprehensions from the circumstance that Sullivan was a straggler. So Hector threw himself under the lee of a gun, drew the cape of his cloak over his head, and with the skirl of the pipes and the cheery sound of merry voices ringing in his ears, soon dropped off into a heavy slumber.

## CHAPTER XII.

IT was daybreak when Hector Macdonald awoke, and, springing to his feet, tried to realise where he was. He had been dreaming of Glenfiloch and of Mary Home. He had been fishing in the little river on a soft spring morning, when Mary Home came up to him, escorted by Mick Sullivan, who had broken out of barracks to get married to her, and wanted Hector to be best man. General Neill was close by, in a black coat and white neckcloth, ready to perform the ceremony, and big Jock Gibson was playing the bagpipes outside the kirk door. Then Fitzloom came on the scene in the capacity

of the corporal of a picket consisting of the Calcutta photographer and old Mr. Home ; and Mick was torn away from his bride and carried into barracks. A grand tableau succeeded this exciting scene in the sleeping lad's imagination. Lady Grant was being enlisted as a recruit by old Macnab of the Grenadiers, and would not pass, being under the standard, but was finally accepted as a light dragoon, Captain Barrow, in the capacity of riding-master, remarking that he would soon take the fat off her. It was at her ladyship's first essay in the riding, while Hector, as rough-rider, was using Sir Dugald's wooden leg as a whip, that he awoke to find himself far away from the tan, and with the rammer of a gun clasped in his hand. The scene around him soon recalled to his mind the incident of the day before, and he gradually recollected having gone

to bed the night before under the bieldy side of the big gun. He must have slept very soundly, he thought, for it was clear there had been bustle around him all night. The earth had been scooped away from the Bailey-guard gate, and several of the guns had been brought inside the Residency. Even as he stood looking on, a detachment of his old friends, the "Lambs," filed in through the open gate. Not with the usual springy, dare-devil carriage which was wont to characterise the gallant Madras men ; the reckless jest, the merry laugh, the frequent loud oath, were alike unheard. With a stern, solemn silence, each man gloomier than his fellow, came on the Fusiliers, with drooping heads and arms reversed. In their midst rolled and creaked a gun-carriage, drawn by bullocks, behind which rode Captain Spurgin and another officer. Under the ruzaie,

which was thrown over the body of the carriage, Hector discerned the form of a man, and his heart smote him with a great foreboding. He spoke not to the sullen Fusiliers, but he ranged himself with the wagon and accompanied it until it halted. Then Spurgin and his brother officer dismounted and stripped off the ruzaie, and lo ! there lay there, stark and dead, Hector's best friend, the noble colonel of the Fusiliers. Sobs burst out among the stern men as they tenderly lifted up the body of their chief, and laid it on a doolie. Men bent down and kissed the firm, placid mouth, shaded with the grizzled moustache. The features were beautiful in their quiet repose. The hair concealed the ghastly traces of the fatal bullet, and death had been instantaneous. What of sternness was wont to be discernible in the brow had faded clean away, and nought



was left save an expression of happy serenity. The God-fearing Ayrshire man had gone to his God, and nothing was left to the men who idolized him but to bury him in a soldier's grave.

“Fall in here, some of you—all of you. Come, never mind about regiments or companies; tumble out anyhow!” Such was the shout that recalled Hector to himself as he stood mournfully by the doolie into which he had helped to place the body of General Neill. An expedition was being organized to go out and fetch in the wounded. Its guide was to be young Bensley Thornhill, of the civil service. This gentleman, who was married to a niece of Havelock, volunteered to guide a party down to the Motee Mahal, and fetch in his cousin and the rest of the wounded. The escort which was made might well have

deserved the name of a "scratch" party got together in a hurry—the first men whom the officers and orderly sergeants encountered were ordered for the duty. There was no hanging back. It had come to be an understood thing that there was always to be a fight or the chance of a fight in the day's work, and men cared little how or where their tale of fighting was to be encountered. As Hector came forward to join the gradually increasing force, he heard a shout for his friend Sergeant Christy, a man who, from his excellent conduct on more than one trying occasion, had come to be looked upon as a tower of strength. Now, the truth was that Christy was somewhat chagrined that so little notice had been taken of the service he had rendered on the occasion of the cavalry surprise at the Alumbagh, and was not so ready at volun-

teering as had been his wont. But the fighting spirit was strong on him, nevertheless, and when he heard Herbert M'Pherson shout his name, he came forward readily enough, but with the muttered remark, "Och, it's always 'Christy,' 'Christy,' when there's wark to be done, but whan the wark is ower, de'il a word is there about Christy syne."

With Thornhill riding at its head, the little party took its way toward the Motee Mahal, keeping a road which skirted the river, and which was screened from the fire of the enemy except in a few places. A few dropping shots were all that greeted it as it pressed on rapidly and in silence; and in no long time it was outside one of the faces of the building in which were the 90th, a number of stragglers, and the wounded. The native bearers brought out

the doolies containing the wounded men just as the enemy opened fire upon the escort, and the order and arrangement which were so essential under the circumstances were departed from. As each doolie was brought out it started with a cluster of soldiers round it as an escort; and under a constantly increasing fire the long irregular *cortége* pressed forward. The first serious obstacle encountered was a deep bridgeless nullah. The bearers plunged in with the doolies, exposed to a raking fire from a building on the left. The water was deep, the black fellows in a dreadful funk, and it was a terribly arduous task to get the doolies over. One, containing Captain Becher, was fairly abandoned by its bearers, and it seemed as if it would sink. Hector Macdonald was by its side in the water, and with an effort of main strength that amazed

himself afterwards, he caught up the heavy doolie, and shoved it, dripping and mud-stained, upon the bank. The crossing of this nullah marked the commencement of the disasters of this most disastrous expedition. Several of the wounded were drowned, and not a few, both of the escort and wounded, were shot. A little farther on the head of the caravan (for no other name is suitable for it) turned to the left, and a few paces farther had entered a large square, at the bottom of which was a gateway, and at the farther side another street. The latter, by which the route would have lain across the top of the square, was the proper line of march ; but instead of taking it, the doolies and their escorts pressed on towards the gateway—the very gateway, it may be remarked, off the roof of the arch of which General Neill was shot on the previous day

—at the foot of the square. Then commenced a scene of butchery which was not equalled for ferocity in any episode of this campaign. The ball was opened by a fierce discharge of musketry from the top of the gateway and the houses in line with it. Staggered by it, the men of the escort faced about to try some other way of exit. Right in their teeth from out ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> loopholed stables which formed one face of what was afterwards known as “Doolie Square,” came another hail-storm of bullets, and from the reverse side another hot fire began. The place was a demoniacal trap, to stop in which was death, to get out of which was impossible. The native doolie-bearers threw down their burdens and bolted, leaving the doolies on the ground. Some of the escort followed their example, and forcing their way in desperation through the archway, emerged

on a road along which, running the gauntlet of a dreadful fire, they escaped somewhat ignobly. Behind them a couple of the leading doolies—to which some of the 78th men, notably Private Henry Ward, with self-denying constancy, stuck—almost by a miracle, were got through the fire—one of them contained young Havelock.

From out the chaos in the square there rode to the front a ghastly object. One arm hung shattered by his side, his pallid face was dabbled with the blood that streamed on to his saddle-bow from a fearful wound in his forehead. The man seemed mad with pain and bewilderment. It was Bensley Thornhill. "Men," he shouted, drawing rein as he came right in the line of the hottest fire, "I have lost my way, and I can do nothing but go and find and bring you reinforcements." With that he wheeled

his horse on his haunches, gored him with the spur, and dashed through the fatal gateway like one possessed. He was the last that passed it, for it was blocked up the moment after ; and now the doomed detachment was in a *cul de sac*. The firing suddenly ceased, but it was only to give place to another species of attack. A band of maddened Sepoys rushed from out the shelter of a house, and made at the doolies containing the wounded. What of the escort was left made a gallant stand, but they were beaten back. Hector Macdonald and another snatched up the doolie of Captain Becher and bore it backward. Lieutenant Arnold, desperately wounded as he was, shot a man who stabbed at him as he lay in his doolie. But a number of the wounded were butchered as they lay before the escort could drive off the murderers. It was seen



that inevitable annihilation awaited all if they remained exposed in the fatal square, and a dash was made to occupy a place on the right-hand side of the gateway. About a dozen men, some of them of the 78th, got in this apartment, and contrived to carry with them of the wounded Captain Becher, Lieutenant Swanston, and several others. So far as could be hastily judged, no wounded occupant of a doolie was left alive outside in the square. But as a precaution, the little garrison planted a man named M'Manus, a man of the 5th Fusiliers, in a position to command the square, and shoot down any of the enemy who should attempt to reach the doolies. Several isolated efforts were made, but the true eye and ready trigger-finger of M'Manus foiled them, considerably to the inconvenience of the over-rash essayers. There was one

place in particular from which a fire was maintained upon the doolies, apparently as fast as a single marksman could load and fire. This was from a round hole over the centre of the gateway. Another of the beleaguered (Hollewell, of the Grenadier company of the 78th) watched this for a little time, and then, coolly stepping out into the square amidst a shower of bullets, he watched his opportunity, and shot the fellow who occupied the objectionable coign of vantage.

A number of doolies had not entered the fatal square when the massacre began. It was hoped by the men in the square that these, warned in time, had gone about, and luckier than themselves, reached some place of safety. But Hector Macdonald's party had barely got under cover, when it became apparent to them that there was a great commotion just at the throat of the street

which they themselves had traversed before reaching the square. Several pistol shots were heard, and shouts of Hindostanee, mingled with something that sounded like a British oath. Hector proposed a sally to learn the cause of the din, and, if need be, to give assistance. Hollewell, of the deadly rifle, and a couple more, were left behind to keep the little citadel, and the rest, with Hector Macdonald at their head, dashed through the fire in the blood-stained square. When the corner was gained, it was seen that there was a swarm of Sepoys clustered round a figure which, with its back to the wall, was keeping them at bay. Hector's men, as they dashed into the thick of the posse, stumbled over the fragments of a smashed doolie, and over the corpse of an officer, that had evidently been an inmate of it. Plying their bayonets, they thrust

their way through the throng, till they reached the spot where a single man with a cavalry sabre, his back up against the wall, and at his feet a wounded lad, was keeping at bay, now with a rapid parry, anon with a rapid sweep cut, and again with a rapid lunge, the throng of howling miscreants who pressed around him. Before the British bayonets the dogs gave back, and Hector, cutting down one who still held his ground, sprang to the side of the man with the dripping sabre in his hand.

“Look if the crature’s alive,” were the first words of Mick Sullivan, for he was the man with the sabre.

Hector stooped and saw that the lad, whom he recognised as a young officer of the 5th Fusiliers, was alive and conscious. He told his chum so.

“Thin, hould me up, Heckthor, acushla, for it’s kilt entoirely, I am.”

And honest Mick threw his arm over his chum's shoulder, and the gallant fellow's head fell upon his breast.

The Pandies were massing again menacingly, so another of the 78th grasped the young officer, and the little party struggled back into their feeble stronghold. When they had reached it, Hector placed Mick on the ground, and Dr. Home volunteered to examine his condition.

“Och and shure, dochter jewel, ye may save yersilf the throuble. I'm kilt all over. There's niver a fragment av me carcase but is as full of wownds as Donnybrook is of drunk men at noightfall. I've got me discharge from the sarvice, and that widout a pinsion. There's niver a praiste in an odd corner av the mansion, is there, Hector?”

Hector was obliged to own that there

was no accommodation of the kind considered.

“I’d fain have confessed before I die, and had a word wid the praiste; but sure they can’t expict a man on sarvice to get out av the world as reglar as if he wor turnin’ his toes up in his bed. Heckthor,” continued the poor fellow, his accents growing rapidly feebler as the blood trickled from him into a hollow of the floor; “Heckthor, me son, give us a hould av yer hand. Ye’ve been a good chum to me ever since ye jined in Canterbury, and I would like that ye would plant me body under the ground somewheres, out av reach av them infernal niggers. Ye mind that young crature in Canterbury that I got spliced to just afore we got the route. There’s some goold and a few dimints in the dimicking bag in me belt, and if ye could send the lot to her ye would

be doin' yer ould chum a kindness. There's an ould crature out on the hills beyant Tipperary, the mother that bore me. She don't want for money sorely, but ye moight sind her a keepsake, only I've lost the addthress. Ould chap, I would like to lave yersel' something to keep ye fram forgettin' ould Mick. There's me spurs, now, Heckthor, rale swan-necks, an' the rowls in fine ordher. Will ye tak them aff me heels, afther the life is gone out av me, and keep them for my sake?"

Hector pressed his chum's hand in silence—his heart was too full to speak. Mick lay back silent for a little, gasping in his growing exhaustion. But suddenly he raised himself again on his elbow, and in a heightened voice continued—

“An' Heckthor, jewel, if ever ye see the ould Sthrawboots again, tell them, will ye,

that ould Mick Sullivan died with a sword in his hand,"—he had never quitted the grip of the bloody sabre—"and wid spurs on his heels. I take ye all to witness, men, that I die a dhragoon, and not a swaddy. Divil a word have I to say against the Ross-shire Buffs, chaps—divil a word; but I'm a dhragoon to the last dhrap av me blood. Ah, me!"—here honest Mick's voice broke for the first time—"ah, me! niver more will I back a horse, or use a sword!"

And then he fell back, panting for breath, and it seemed as if these had been his last words. But the mind of the dying man was still on a train of thought which would have expression. Again he sprang into sitting posture, as if galvanised, and loud and clear, as if on the parade-ground, there rang out from his lips the consecutive words of command—



“Carry swords!”

“Return swords!”

“Prepare to dismount!”

“Dismount!”

A torrent of blood gushed from his mouth, and he fell forward dead. He had dismounted for ever. Farewell, honest, gallant, ignorant Mick; not untrue type of many a British soldier—with many virtues and many vices. Your virtues were innate, and grew up through the masses of rubbish which cumbered the ground; your faults were those of ignorance, prejudice, tradition, and situation. They are talking of “nationalising” the army now, and such men as you under the new *régime* may give place to steady-going business men, who will look neither to the right nor the left, but onward to the mark of a commission. These days may come, and the millennium will probably

supervene in due course ; but till the latter event supersedes the necessity for a standing army, it will be a bad day for the standing army of Great Britain when men like Mick Sullivan are not to be found in its ranks.

## CHAPTER XIII.

IT must not be imagined that poor Mick Sullivan was allowed to die in peace. On the contrary, his gallant spirit left its earthly casket amid the firing of bullets and the shouts of exultant Sepoys. They had ventured down into the square, and were thronging around the doorway of the apartment where the Europeans were; never venturing to come to close quarters, but sending their shot thick and fast against the door. There were those among them, however, who paid dear for their temerity. M'Manus, after the charge that rescued Sullivan was over, refused to come within what-

ever precarious shelter the stifling room afforded. The gallant fellow remained outside the doorway, with his trusty rifle in his grip. Partly sheltered behind a pillar, he kept up a steady and deadly fire right into the teeth of the howling miscreants who thronged the space in front of him. Every bullet told, sometimes doubly, and at length this man, single-handed, cowed the whole posse of cut-throats. So deadly was that rifle of his, that their eyes were concentrated upon it as by mesmerism, and as often as it came up to the shoulder they scurried like a pack of kicked dogs. But presently there came an accession to their numbers, and, fearful of being taken in flank, M'Manus had to beat a retreat, although, in cricketing phrase, he carried his bat out in triumph. Then the doorway was barricaded, partly with the loose woodwork which was found

in the house, and partly with sandbags, which were manufactured roughly out of the cummerbunds stripped from the Sepoy dead which lay close around the doorway, the *spolia opima* of M'Manus's rifle. But the sandbags did not suffice, and honest Paddy Ryan, of the Madras Fusiliers, developed a talent for impromptu engineering that of itself deserved the Victoria Cross. He piled up the dead Sepoys on the top of the barricade, and their live comrades had the empty joy of firing into the carcasses of their dead comrades.

The terror inspired by the rifle of the doughty M'Manus being removed, the Sepoys took heart of grace so far as to come close up, and pour through the barricade torrents of abuse in choice Hindostanee. They defied the forlorn remnant of the men whom they had cowered before but an hour ago. They

yelled taunts and objurgations through the crevices, and in the haughtiness of their hearts they cursed the Europeans by their gods, as Goliath of old did David. So close were they that Captain Becher, from his recumbent position, and wounded as he was, was able to give back taunt for taunt and curse for curse. At length their leader, gathering courage from impunity, called on his followers to make a charge on the barricade, urging that there were but three men composing the defence. As a counter-demonstration, the beleaguered gave a loud cheer, wounded and all joining; and poor Mick Sullivan, albeit at the last gasp, spent what little breath was in him in this last effort.

When the life was out of him, and his body had been put on one side in a quiet corner, honest Paddy Ryan began to be demonstrative. Paddy had an abiding be-

lief that his officer, Lieutenant Arnold, whose thigh had been broken on the Charbagh Bridge, was yet alive in his doolie outside. Paddy was a simple fellow, and liked to prove his case, not by casuistry, but by actual demonstration. So, after many mutterings and a few good broad hints, he faced bluntly the knot of men whom misfortune had made his companions, and demanded abruptly to know "Who the devil was man enough to come out wid him and fotch in Mr. Arnold, did or alive?" He had not to ask twice. The lot would have gone freely ; but only one could be spared, and as M'Manus was nearest the outside, he, although he had a bullet wound in his foot, went out cheerfully. To see the eager solicitude with which poor Paddy Ryan scuttled up to the doolie which contained his officer was a sight pathetic in its comicality. Arnold

was alive. Tenderly Paddy dragged him out, as the musket bullets whistled about the pair. M'Manus took the feet of the wounded officer, and with another scurry, the bullets driving up the sand around them, they got inside, but not before Arnold had received another fearful wound. M'Manus reported that he had noticed a man moving in another doolie, and before the barricade was rebuilt Hector Macdonald and Hollewell, of the 78th, made another sally. They, too, were successful in bringing in their man, but the poor fellow, although alive when they took him out of his doolie, received two mortal wounds in the middle passage.

For an hour or two the position of affairs was not greatly altered. Firing went on through the doorway, and from the window that looked into the square. Here Hector



Macdonald received a bullet wound in the right arm, which prevented him from using his rifle ; and two others of the scanty party were also wounded. From these losses the fire slackened, and a rush in upon the part of the assailants seemed imminent. But quiet, self-contained Hollewell came to the front miraculously. Every now and then dropping a cheering word to his comrades, the honest fellow stuck by the deadly window, and he never drew trigger but a howl gave cognisance that it had told a tale. There was a fiendish old man with a long white beard, dressed in white, with a red cummerbund, who acted as leader of the assailants, brandishing a sword with much gesticulation, and capering frantically in the excesses of his doughty wrath. Hollewell bode his time, and contrived to put a bullet into this venerable individual, who forth-

with departed this life ; and then his adherents seemed to lose courage for a time, and desisted both from their firing and their infernal din.

Dr. Home broke through a plaster window into an outer room, but ere long was driven back, and from behind a screen that they had brought up the enemy mounted on the roof, raised the clay of which it was composed, and showered down bundles of burning straw into the room. The smoke was fearful, and threatened suffocation ; but again Hollewell was to the fore with an expedient. He called on his fellows—and he himself set the example—to throw the sand of which the floor was composed upon the blazing straw. Temporarily the plan answered ; but as the straw increased in quantity undefined, while the supply of sand was limited, there clearly was an end

to this expedient, and in the issue the wood-work of the room itself caught fire.

This made the place too hot to hold. An informal council of war was held. There was not much respect of persons there. Paddy Ryan, with his brogue, had as good a say as the Doctor and the Captain. In fact, it was his proposal that was finally adopted. There were the sheds on the north side of the square, and he proposed a bolt into them. From the door which opened into the square to the nearest door of the sheds there was a distance of only about a dozen yards, and although the risk was great, everybody felt that anything was better than being burned alive. Three of the most severely hurt of the wounded were hoisted on the backs of sound men, and the dash was made. All got into the sheds, but not in safety. Mr. Swanston, previously wound-

ed, had got his mortal wound in the torrents of bullets that beat upon the scurrying remnant, and just at the entrance to the sheds, Hector Macdonald, whose arm was already slung to his neck by a fragment of his shirt, was struck down by a bullet through the thigh. And now Hector, whose natural physique had hitherto sustained him, began to feel that all hope was gone as he lay in the safest corner of the shed. The pain of his wound was severe, but nothing to his mental anguish. He feared not death. He seemed, indeed, to have nothing to live for ; but to die in this fashion, like a rat worried in a hole, was not the death he coveted. He thought of Mick, whose last act was one that, if any of the party now in so fearful a jeopardy survived, would send his name throughout the length and breadth of the land which he

never expected to see again, and he chafed as he wished but for five minutes' power to stand erect and use a weapon, that he might seek the inevitable death in the heart of the dusky throng that yelled and howled outside.

But Hector's chafing was yet to receive an increment of intensity. From the house which the party had first occupied half-way across the square, as it was, the posse of doolies in the angle of the square had been in a great measure capable of protection. It was hardly, indeed, expected that any of their hapless inmates were alive, but the rifles of Hollewell and M'Manus could at least avail that the bodies of their countrymen should not be desecrated by plundering hands. But from this new position it was impossible effectively to cover the doolies, and the few who were able to keep watch

and ward saw Sepoy after Sepoy dodge inward along the sheds on the further side, and disappear behind the curtains of the doolies, as shelter between them and the beleaguered. Then there arose the harrowing cries of men butchered in cold blood—for there had yet been alive inmates of the doolies. The appalling sound was maddening to the handful of men in the sheds opposite; there were but half a dozen who had the use of their legs, and fain would these few have rushed to the rescue. But all the time another section of the omnipresent enemy were firing down upon them from the roof, while others were ready, on the opportunity, to dash in to the slenderly-guarded stronghold. They had their own wounded to protect, and harrowing as it was, they had to submit with curdled blood and curses, not loud, but deep, to listen to

the cries of their countrymen, as the butchers hacked at their already wounded frames. Yet, utterly miraculously, one of the occupants of the doolies made his escape. A sowar, with a bloody sword in his fist, came up to a doolie and drew the curtain aside. From the other side there sprang out one whom those in the shed opposite recognised as Lieutenant Knight, of the 90th Regiment. A hailstorm of bullets assailed him, already dreadfully wounded as he was. He fell twice, but as often rose to his feet. A sowar dashed at him out to the front, but Knight, if his legs were riddled, yet knew how to send out a straight right-hander from the shoulder. The man went down like an ox, and the British officer, with a limping run, went round the corner, leaving his pursuers behind. So far as those who remained could tell, he had escaped.

And now the night began to fall upon that fearful scene. The besieged party in the sheds placed their miserable watches; they had nine men who could stand upright and look a foe in the face. These were divided into three reliefs, and the rest huddled together around the doorway. When the darkness fell, it was indeed the darkness or utter desolation and despair. There were within the shed dead men of the enemy, wretches who, shot by the ready fire of our men, had shrunk within the shelter to die. The wounded had begun to rave in the feverish delirium caused by their numerous wounds, and by the intolerable thirst which there was no means to quench. Outside, the enemy had set fire to several of the doolies, and in the ears of the unhappy occupants of the shed there rang the groans of the wounded, who were dying a death infinitely



more fearful than death by bullet or sword. There was but little speech. Men were too far gone in despair to commune one with another.

As the groans of the dying men in the burning doolies were heard, the watchers looked at each other with ghastly eyes, but spoke not a word from out their parched throats. Overhead there echoed the measured tramp of the Sepoy sentries, watching the holes in the roof, and waiting presumably for daylight, to renew the fire which had previously made the place untenable.

About two in the morning there was a false excitement of hope. A heavy firing was heard close by, and the little garrison raised shouts of guidance as loudly as they could, but no rescue came, and despair returned. Dr. Home, refusing to throw up the sponge without one last effort, crept for-

ward under the shadow of the building to the verge of the archway, anxious to see whether the way was clear in that direction. But there burnt just inside it a huge fire, and a great mass of Sepoy soldiers were clustered around it, keeping watch and ward over the outlet. It was plain that there was "no thoroughfare" here, and so he came back and told his little force that escape was hopeless. The weary watches of the night passed. But just as day was beginning to break, and when the Sepoys on the roof were heralding more active measures by a few dropping shots down into the shed, there reverberated through the square the noise of a distant firing. So oppressed with a conviction that disappointment would be the result of hope were the little knot of men, that they did not care to rouse themselves for any effort. But it came

nearer and nearer; and at length a few shots pinged into the square. The Irishman is always buoyant, and Paddy Ryan, springing to his feet, shouted in a strange, wild voice, "Och, chaps, thim's sure our own men!" Paddy's enthusiasm was catching. A cheer was joined in, and the last cartridges were spent in firing at the loopholes, from which the enemy were covering the entrance into the square. Presently Captain Moorsom came up to the entrance into the shed with stout men at his back, and the wearied and wounded were relieved from the fear of imminent death. It was the rear-guard of the 90th, marching into the Residency from the Motee Mahal, that had thus opportunely come to their rescue. The wounded were placed in doolies and slowly borne into the Residency, where they were disposed of in the hospital. Hec-

tor Macdonald was totally unconscious of his removal. Long before the party were relieved he was raving in delirium, and he was in a state of high fever when borne into the hospital. Here we must leave him for many weary days and nights. His wounds became inflamed, and when the inflammation subsided, in the hot and fetid atmosphere of the crowded hospital gangrene supervened, and for weeks he hung between life and death. Only his naturally strong constitution pulled him through, when others around were succumbing before the demon of hospital gangrene. Powerless, weak, and ailing, they heard the noise of the siege, in which they longed to take a part; and many of them prayed piteously before it came for that death which came too surely to most.

## CHAPTER XIV.

EVER since the occupation of the Residency of Lucknow by the force under the command of Havelock and Outram, communication between the garrison and the outside had become considerably easier than it was before. In the early days of the siege of Lucknow there was but one reliable medium of communication—viz, the scout. The Alumbagh, occupied as it was by a detachment, formed a useful place for the cosid to make for before adventuring the longer journey to Cawnpore ; and on his return he was able to remain there, biding his time for the enterprise of re-entering the garrison,

which oftener failed than the outgoing one. These cossids or native messengers were, however, mere fetch and carry automatons, and if asked any questions supplementary to the letter which they carried, they were as likely as not to give a misleading answer. It was on the 30th of October that certain intelligence reached the garrison that Sir Colin Campbell's advance might be almost immediately expected, and General Outram at once conceived the idea of facilitating the Commander-in-Chief's entry into the Residency by sending him plans of the city and its approaches, as well as some hints derived from experience as to the most advisable line of approach. These, however, required to be supplemented by some *viva voce* explanations, such as no native messenger could be expected—or, indeed, trusted—to convey, and some difficulty was experienced in

finding a suitable man for the purpose. There were plenty of officers who would have gladly volunteered, but their presence and services were valuable to the garrison ; while among the non-commissioned officers it was not easy to find one who could with any semblance at all be disguised as a native, or whose intelligence was equal to the task of giving a satisfactory explanation of the plans which had to be forwarded.

Hector Macdonald by this time had become convalescent. Worn to a shadow with illness, and gaunt as a greyhound, it only required that his colour, already yellow enough, should be deepened a few shades, and that his dress should be made conformable, to make the Scottish lad a very passable native. He had a natural aptitude for tactics ; and when, having heard of the difficulty, he went to a staff-officer and proffered

himself for the duty, a few minutes' conversation satisfied General Outram that he had the right man at his disposal. Outram, indeed, had some recollection of Hector, springing out of the old volunteer cavalry days, and the arrangement was made in a very short time. Hector had to make the best of his way to the Alumbagh, report himself to the officer in command there, deposit his plans in his keeping, and furnish that officer with all the details necessary for Sir Colin, in case of any mischance happening to himself.

Hector's preparations were soon completed. He assumed the disguise of a native budmash or irregular mutineer soldier, bearing a sword and shield, and wearing native shoes, tight trousers, a yellow silk jacket over a white muslin shirt, a coloured chintz sheet thrown round his shoulders, a cream



coloured turban, and a white cummerbund. His face down to the shoulders, and his hands, were coloured with lampblack, the cork being dipped in oil to make the colour stick. He stowed away his plans around his loins, and quietly left the garrison after nightfall, under the guidance of a native scout. They forded the Goomtee, following the reverse bank till they reached the iron bridge, which they crossed, and struck right through the heart of the crowded city till they gained the open country beyond. Several times they were interfered with by native pickets, and closely interrogated ; but Hector's acquaintance with Hindustanee stood him in good stead, and in the grey dawn of the morning he found himself in front of the garden-house of the Alumbagh.

He obeyed his orders as to the disposal of his plans and explanations, and had a long

conference with the principal officers of the Alumbagh detachment. An idea was prevalent among them that Sir Colin might make a circuit so as to avoid the Alumbagh altogether, and it was thought of much importance that an intelligent account should be conveyed to him of the arguments in favour of his taking the Alumbagh in his advance. Hector at once volunteered to press forward along the Cawnpore road, as soon as the native scouts should report that the commander-in-Chief should have crossed the Ganges. On the 6th of November, word reached the Alumbagh that the Delhi column under Sir Hope Grant had crossed the Bunnee Bridge and were halted there, waiting for the coming up of Sir Colin Campbell. Hector thought that it was now quite time for him to follow out the programme which had been laid down to him, and according-

ly, having disguised and lacquered himself afresh, he set out for Bunnee.

In this second journey he was not so fortunate as he had been in his previous, to all appearance, much more formidable attempt. He had not gone above a few miles when he and his guide were intercepted and cross-examined by a straggling detachment of Sepoy cavalry. Hector might have deceived this party as he had done several others already encountered, had it not been for the pusillanimity of his guide. That fellow perhaps thought the questions were more searching than ordinary, for in the midst of the colloquy he made a sudden bolt and got clean away, leaving Hector to his fate. The sowars, of course, had their suspicions whetted by this line of action on the part of the guide, and they subjected Hector to a minute scrutiny, which resulted

in the discovery that underneath his native clothing his skin was white. He was at once stripped, and a close investigation made to discover any letter. Hector carried all his information inside his head, having left the plans at the Alumbagh with which Outram had entrusted him. The unsuccessful search concluded, deliberate preparations were made for hanging Hector. The sowars were in no hurry; they took things quite as a matter of course, and seemed to consider that there was no other course open to them but summarily to bring Hector's career to a termination. Hector thought himself as good as dead; but he had a great dislike to dying in this dog-in-a-ditch way. He told his captors that he was no spy, but a doctor, whose reputation was so high that he had been sent for to Cawnpore, and even forced to risk his life by travelling in dis-

guise in this way, at the commands of the great General, who demanded his presence to cure one of his principal officers, who was not expected to live without his attentions. The troopers held a long consultation, and at length told him that they would not hang him at once, but would reserve him until he had seen one of their native high officers, who was near the point of death, and that it would depend upon his fate whether Hector should be allowed to live or should be summarily put an end to. Hector was fain to accept this bargain for life, and having been permitted to redress himself in the native costume, was mounted behind one of the troopers and carried off at a hand gallop in a direction at right angles to the Cawnpore road. For two days the sowars pressed on rapidly, with him in their train, and on the evening of the se-

cond they rode into a small place called Sissendee. Here was lying the wounded Sepoy officer, to cure whom Hector had been spared. He found his patient lying in a doolie in the varandah of a house in the street of the village, and, summoning up what appearance of medical skill he could simulate, he began to strip the bandages from off the wounded man. His Lucknow experiences had made him familiar with the appearance of gangrene, and he soon saw that the mortification had advanced to a hopeless pitch in the wounded limb; so that arguing with reference to himself, he saw nothing but certainty of speedy death.

While he was bathing the wounds of the semi-comatose man with a lotion, a native who had been prowling about the verandah for some time ventured within speaking distance, under pretence of yielding some assistance.

When the sentry's back was turned this man whispered the question to Hector whether or not he was a "Sahib," adding that he had been a servant to a "padre" before the mutiny at Cawnpore, and was well affected to the Sahibs. Hector saw no reason why he should not reply in the affirmative; he had no hope that any good would come from either a denial or an acknowledgment. The native then whispered that he was to order the sick man to be taken inside during the night, and that he was to remain by him, and keep awake and watchful, and particularly to be on the alert when he should hear a low whistle. At this moment the sentry came under the verandah, and asked what the talk was about. Hector quietly replied that he had asked the man to get him some water to wash his hands, which reply appeared to divert the suspicions of the sentry.

When nightfall came Hector followed his unknown friend's instructions. His requisition was complied with without much difficulty, and having been well fed, he was shut up inside a room along with the fast dying Sepoy. About one o'clock the man died, and Hector was left alone with the corpse, not daring to call for anyone until he should discover whether there was really anything in the promise of his afternoon friend or not. About two o'clock he heard the signal at the back of the room, and a door in the gable was gently opened. A hand beckoned through the opening, and Hector, scarcely recking whether he went or stayed, obeyed the summons. He was hurriedly led down a narrow lane, and brought into a house at the foot of it, in which he found a gloomy light burning. His guide brought him rapidly through what



seemed to be the principal room, and huddled him into a pigeon-hole sort of space on the further side of it. Here he found a rug, and was fain, in utter weariness, to lie down and fall asleep.

It was well on in the morning before his protector entered his little closet and called him. When Hector had risen from his rug the Hindoo brought him out, but not into the outer room through which they had passed on the preceding evening, but into a larger inner room, with one small window in it, which looked into an enclosed garden. Here he left the disguised European over some food, and went away. Hector had barely swallowed a few morsels of food when the door again opened, and a female figure entered. What was Hector's wild astonishment when the features of Mary Home met his startled gaze! Yes, it was

herself—pale, thin, and worn, yet beautiful as ever in the sadness which had succeeded her once joyous *espièglerie*. As he looked on her, a mist came over Hector's eyes, and a faintness over his brain, but he steadied himself as she spoke to him.

“Ramadheen tells me he saw through your disguise yesterday, and has done what he could to save you.”

It was evident she had not recognized Hector.

“I am hardly less surprised at Ramadheen's success than at finding a European lady under his roof. How came you here?”

“When my father was struck down in the water at Cawnpore, when the Nana betrayed us, myself and the other women were dragged backward toward the Nana's headquarters. On the road I was caught up and carried off by Ramadheen and two of his

family, to whom my father, Mr. Home, had been of service before the mutiny broke out. Ramadheen belonged to Oudh, and he thought he would be safer with me on this side of the river, so he had a boat in waiting a little way down the river, by which we crossed, and here I have remained in concealment ever since. I have heard of the fearful massacre, which made my blood run cold. But you—whence are you?—or how came you in this disguise?”

“I am from Lucknow, carrying tidings from General Outram to Sir Colin Campbell, who is on his way to relieve Lucknow. I was taken prisoner the other day, and would have been hanged this morning had it not been for your good friend Ramadheen; and further, Mary Home, I am Hector Macdonald!”

Had Hector Macdonald been a selfish

man, he might well have been gratified by the emotion which the girl displayed. The blood rushed into her face for an instant, only to be succeeded by a deadly paleness as she gasped for breath, and seemed about to faint. With an effort she recovered herself, and burying her face in her hands, she burst into tears.

Hector kept silence for a little, and then told her in a low voice that he already knew of her father's fate, how he had collected mementoes of his two old friends, and how up till the moment of their meeting he had believed—and sorrowed in the belief—that Mary was among the women slain in the fearful massacre in the compound of Cawnpore. He had been able to secrete about him, and to preserve from sacrilegious hands, the ring which he had picked up on the blood-soaked matting of the bungalow, and

as he spoke he produced the little bauble, telling Mary that the finding of it was the chief link in the chain of evidence that had convinced him she was among the murdered. Mary wept the more bitterly as she took the little hoop of gold in her trembling fingers, and gazed at it long and wistfully through her tears. Then she found her voice, and gave Hector the explanation.

“It was after poor papa had been beaten down, and I had been dragged on shore by the brutal Sepoys. The women were all sitting on the bank looking for immediate death, and some of us, to ease the intensity of our feelings, began exchanging little keepsakes and tokens of regard. Poor dear Mrs. Moore and I had been the dearest of friends for months, and as she sat weeping, with her children clinging to her, I gave her my ring, and she gave this little brooch. It

was poor Mrs. Moore that must have dropped the ring where you found it, and it is a proof—if, indeed, proof were needed—that she was slain on that fearful evening. They must have killed her children too, for she would have died like a tigress defending them.”

Hector told her that he had learned not a soul had escaped the massacre, and Mary sat stunned by the very contemplation of the horrible barbarity. It was some time before she recalled her mind from the sorrowful reverie into which she had fallen; but at length she drew a long breath, and looking up, asked Hector how he came to be in India at all, and in what capacity.

Hector explained that he had enlisted and volunteered, and then gave a short sketch of what had happened to him after joining the 78th. He also told Mary of the photo-

graph incident in Calcutta, and she opened her eyes in terror-stricken amazement as he told her of the death of Fitzloom. But there was one thing which Mary did not understand, evidently, and about which she wanted an explanation.

“How on earth did you, the laird of Macdonald’s son, come to enlist as a private soldier?”

“Mary, my father and I had a fierce dispute. It was the morning after our last meeting at the clachan of Feshiedale. Do you remember that evening?”

A vivid blush overspread Mary’s face as she owned to the remembrance.

“I may have been foolish, Mary, but I thought you would take back your word if the obstacles to which you referred were removed. I asked my father that they should be removed. He refused angrily,

we quarrelled, and I quitted his home, careless what became of me.”

“So it has been a foolish quarrel, for such a cause, that has brought you to this dangerous plight. Mr. Macdonald—Hector—I am so sorry to know that you are in this strait. Your danger is only postponed, I fear—not removed. Oh! how I wish we were all back in Scotland again, at good Lady Grant’s fireside!” And the poor girl burst into a passionate fit of sobbing.

Hector’s heart yearned to say something which he knew he ought not to say, and with a great effort he restrained himself. It was no time, he felt, for asking for love-pledges, which a cord or bullet might break to-morrow. Waiting till Mary had grown a little calmer, he asked her what were her prospects of safety.

She was safe enough, she thought, and



Ramadheen told her he had no fear. She had heard of Sir Colin Campbell's intended advance, and Ramadheen believed it would be easy enough to conceal her in his place till the re-occupation of the country by the British took place, which the sagacious Ramadheen believed was inevitable. But she had had one or two narrow escapes, for Ramadheen was a suspect, and only the circumstance that she was a woman—and that the searchers were looking for male fugitives—had availed her.

At this moment Ramadheen himself came in in great haste. Hector's escape had long been discovered, and the sowars were scouring the country in all directions. It was believed he had murdered his patient, and the search for him was sure to be rigorous. Ramadheen believed that his place would be the first to be searched when the sowars

should return from their futile quest, and the Sahib must be got away from it somewhere. Ramadheen was very sorry—he would do anything to save the life of a Sahib, but there was Missy Baba to be looked to, whose father's bread he and his had eaten ; and the Sahib must take his chance. He altered Hector's disguise, making him up as a pasie—and gave him a quantity of useful advice on the subject of effectually maintaining the appearance of a native. He also counselled him to abandon all thoughts either of returning to Lucknow or of reaching the Alumbagh ; but to make direct for the Ganges—once across which the road to Cawnpore was comparatively clear and safe. All the Oudh side was, however, swarming with bands of insurgents, and Ramadheen did not attempt to conceal from Hector that

he thought his chance of getting through worth not a very great deal.

When the alterations in his disguise were complete, he went to take farewell of the Mary whom he had only just found. He had had a glimpse of Paradise, but the glimpse was so brief that it seemed as if it had been accorded only to tantalise him. When he entered the room he found Mary Home sunk down upon the floor sobbing quietly. He had nothing to say that could comfort her; but he stammered forth a few earnest words at least of condolence. The ring which he had found at Cawnpore lay upon the table—he had placed it there as having returned it to its owner. He took it up, and asked Mary whether she would allow him to take it again. Certainly, she said; he had found it, and it was actually his. Then the spirit came over Hector,

urging him to go one step further—the spirit which he had checked in their previous conversation, but which got the mastery of him now.

“Mary,” said he in a low tone, “I want to know whether you give me this ring as a mere matter of course, or whether I might take the gift as an earnest that did time and place permit I might ask with hope for something more.”

“Take it, take it, Hector, and pray God for better and happier times for both of us. I shall pray for your safety in this fearful enterprise of yours morn and night; and now you must go, for I notice Ramadheen’s impatience, and I am sure it is entirely unselfish.”

Smearred in greasy pigment as he was, the poor fellow was holding back from touching her, either with hand or lip; but,

like a true woman, Mary did not stand for a little lampblack. She held out both her hands as he turned sorrowfully away. In a moment Hector had clasped them—in another she was against his breast, and his lips were on her forehead. Then, with one long yearning look down into the depths of the beautiful eyes, he loosened his grasp, turned away, and was by honest Ramadheen's side trudging down the lane ere the soft light of them had faded out from before his own eyes.

Ramadheen durst not be seen in public along with anybody about whom he might be cross-examined afterwards. He went to the foot of the lane, and gave Hector his points of departure for the river. Then he showed him a little abandoned hut in the corner of a paddy-field, in which he counselled him to lie *perdu* till nightfall, as he

might chance, were he to commence his journey in the daytime, to encounter some of his captors of the day before returning from the unsuccessful search after him, in which case his fate would be very quickly decided. So Hector Macdonald crept into the hut in the corner of the paddy-field, and lay there till nightfall, thinking of Mary Home.

## CHAPTER XV.

IT was in the autumn of 1858. The neck of the Indian mutiny had been broken for months, and although there was still some fighting, it was but the disconnected and desultory efforts of men who were reduced to a state of despair. But we are done with India, and the scene changes to Parliament Street. One hot September afternoon, a tall, sunburnt, soldierly man, young in years, apparently, yet old in hardship and exposure, sauntered slowly up from Westminster Bridge in the direction of the Horse Guards. Instead of taking the broad thoroughfare, something prompt-

ed him to thread the narrower gorge of King Street, and glance down Charles Street. He saw but little change since he was there three years ago. The "Hampshire Hog" looked a shade or two dingier; the "Cheshire Cheese" looked as if water were an unknown commodity in that part of Westminster. There were still the trim and dashing warriors sauntering up and down the narrow pavement, gossiping at the corners, or turning in for the conventional twopennorth at one or other of the familiar bars. Hector Macdonald—for the sunburnt wayfarer was he—smiled as he saw the gaunt sergeant of the Greys who had tackled him on national grounds when he entered Charles Street for the first time, when up stepped a dapper young light cavalry sergeant, and proceeded patronisingly to interrogate Hector as to his views on



the subject of enlistment ; but the dapper youth collapsed under a contemptuous demand from an old medalled sergeant whether he could not tell a soldier when he saw one, and an advice not to expose his own ignorance in such a flagrant manner. The old sergeant had, however, something to say to Hector on his own account. He knew him for a soldier at a glance, but thought there might be an off chance of realising a pound for the apprehension of a deserter, so he quietly followed Hector to the corner of the street, and then asked him confidentially whether he had such a thing as a pass or a discharge paper about him. Hector laughed outright at the honest sergeant at the first blush of the notion ; but afterwards he saw that, were the sergeant to persist, some inconvenience would ensue. So he took the man into a public-house and

gave him an account of who he was and what he was, and what were the reasons that he had neither pass nor discharge. The sergcant professed himself satisfied, especially when Hector showed him certain documents confirmatory of the story he had to tell, and the two walked up together to the entrance of the Horse Guards.

Hector wanted to obtain some very important information here, but he did not know how to set about it. Not being able to explain himself very clearly, he was bandied about from one office to the other with very little ceremony. At length he found a gentleman, who, since he had just finished the perusal of *Punch*, appeared to have a little more leisure than any of those he had previously met with. To him Hector proceeded to unbosom himself. He wanted to know what he was. He had originally be-

longed to the 30th Light Dragoons, then he had volunteered into the 78th Highlanders, and, finally, had been transferred to the Volunteer Cavalry, organized by Havelock, and he wanted to know what he belonged to at present, and what he was to do to keep himself within the four corners of military law.

“Dem rum thing altogether,” was the sage comment of the clerk, who was a gentleman of literary tastes. “Suppose, now, you keep quiet for a week or two, and tell your story in detail to me, and I’ll pay for your keep during the time, and give you something for a start afterwards. Gad, Murray would jump at a narrative of your adventures.”

Hector was too anxious to find out his exact position in the military world to accept this stupendously liberal offer, more especi-

ally as it struck him he could enlist "Murray's" saltatory promptings at first hand if he chose. So he pressed the literary clerk to give him some clue which he might follow up. But the clerk was disappointed and sulky, and as good as intimated to Hector that he might go to the devil.

A friendly orderly at length told him that he thought the Horse Guards was the wrong shop altogether; and that he would stand a far better prospect of finding out what he wanted to know by going to the War-Office. So across the park to the War-Office bewildered Hector stalked. The gentlemen across at the War-Office were rather more civil, but quite as "know nothing" as those at the Horse Guards. Some advised him to go to Leadendall Street, and see the Company's people; others said he ought to go back to the Horse Guards; others again

were of opinion that he would save them trouble, and himself any further service, if he would hold his tongue, and go and look for a situation in the civilian world.

At length, however, he was directed to a room, where he was told he would be sure to find a gentleman who knew all about the Volunteer Cavalry of the Cawnpore Campaign. He found four gentlemen in the room.

He gave his name, and told his story. The clerk had a long investigation among old forms and accounts, and having concluded his search, he said to Hector,

“Now, my man, you really must go away. You are down here as dead. You are supposed to be dead, and you are taking a most unwarrantable liberty with the rules and regulations of the service not to be dead. I’m not sufficiently acquainted with the Arti-

cles of War to know what is the punishment that would be inflicted in the circumstance, but I have no reason to doubt it would be a very heavy one. There is the entry 'Dead;' you can look at it yourself, and then I hope you will be convinced."

Hector looked, and certainly there was his name, with "Dead" written opposite to it; but as he had a strong impression that he was alive, the perusal of the entry did not produce the effect apparently expected by the clerk. The clerk turned in desperation to his fellows, and asked their opinions in the emergency. One took a bold view of the case :

"Gad, my belief is the fellah is an impostah. Look here, Fitzsimmons, try the effect of a threat you will give him in charge for high treason, or sturdy mendicancy, or some

tall word or other. He'll cut it quick sticks then, I bet."

"My advice is," said another, "bundle him off to the depôt of the 78th, wherever the deuce it is. They will find out all about him, and if there is anything in the fellow's story they'll claim in the usual way."

"Tell him to go away and never come back, but to put his case in writing, and address it to the Secretary of State." This was a third suggestion. Fitzsimmons thought it the best. He told Hector that it was quite an exceptional indulgence which had been permitted to him to intrude in person on the privacy of the War-Office, and that he might congratulate himself upon having met with so much attention; but that his case was one of so complicated a character that he must go away and put it in writing, and that there was no doubt he would

receive a written reply in due course. There was nothing for Hector but to retire, which he did, amazed at the curious workings of the Circumlocution Office. He had been all but apprehended as a deserter, and when he wished to know how, when, or where he was to rejoin the service, he was called an impostor, and more or less civilly asked to believe himself dead.

Pondering these things, Hector turned into a coffee-house, and sitting down called for some tea. There is one piece of reading which you can always procure in a coffee-house, no matter how full it is; and that is the supplement of the *Times*. It was hanging over the back of the box which Hector entered, and half mechanically he laid hold of it. He certainly was not reading it; probably he could not have mentioned what paper it was had he been



asked ; but he sat there thinking intently, yet desultorily, with his hand stroking his chin, and his eyes fixed upon the open paper. Presently it seemed to dawn upon him gradually that his own name was staring him in the face from out its columns. So deep was his reverie that he was conscious of this for some time before he drew any conclusion from it, but the waiter suddenly clapped a tray on the table, at once smashing the reverie and obscuring the paper. Hector, recalled to himself by this incident, realised that the name “Hector Macdonald,” which he had just seen in capital letters in the second column of the first page of the *Times*, might have some interest for himself, and he proceeded to read the advertisement of which the name was the heading. The advertisement was in the following terms :—

**H**ECTOR MACDONALD, only son of the late Alistair Macdonald, Esq., of Macdonald.—Information regarding this young man will be handsomely paid for. He left his father's house on the 25th day of May, 1855, and has never afterwards been heard of. His father's death took place in February last. Evidence wanted of Hector Macdonald's whereabouts, if alive; or proof of his death, if dead.—Apply to Maclure, Fraser, and Champion, 500, Bedford Row.

Hector did not drink the tea which the waiter had brought him. Catching up his hat he strode off to Bedford Row, where he found one partner still in the office, Mr. Fraser. Admitted into that legal gentleman's sanctum, he informed him curtly that his name was Hector Macdonald, and that he had called in consequence of having seen the advertisement just referred to. Mr. Fraser, a cautious Strathdon man, put on his spectacles to have a good look at him, and, after a critical survey, said in a tone of dry suspicion—

“It is rather curious, young man, that I have only this morning received a letter from the adjutant of the 78th Highlanders, who, it appears, was acquainted with both Mr. Macdonald, senior, and Mr. Macdonald, junior, before the latter joined the 78th Regiment in India, having previously served in the 30th Light Dragoons. This gentleman writes that young Macdonald volunteered at Cawnpore into a troop of volunteer cavalry, and was severely wounded at the first relief of Lucknow. Having recovered from his wounds, he volunteered to carry messages from General Outram to the Commander-in-Chief; and, to make a long story short, he disappeared in the prosecution of the attempt, there being no reasonable doubt that he had fallen into the hands of the mutineers. His fate, my correspondent says, there can be no reasonable question about.

These were not times, he continued, for sparing life. Now what explanation have you to offer as to this? I may just mention that, satisfied that Hector Macdonald had perished, I have given instructions for the withdrawal of the advertisement you have seen, and meant to write to Scotland to-night, advising that the next of kin might at once be served heir to the Macdonald estate."

"Captain M'Pherson," replied Hector, "has told you the truth, so far as he knows. I was indeed made prisoner, as he supposes, but here I am, alive and well, for all that. I escaped from my captors through the intervention of a friendly native, and fell into the hands of a friendly native of some influence. By him I was kept in concealment for some time, till he undertook a journey to the hills, in which, always maintaining my disguise, I accompanied him. He

sent a guide with me across the great Indian desert, as far as Bahulpore. From the country of the Ameers of Sindh I travelled through the Bolan Pass to Quettah, and thence by the Valley of Pisheen to Candahar. I remained some time in Candahar, and thence got to Herat, where I found friends. After some stay here, I travelled to Meshed, and from Meshed to Astrabad, by the way of Subzawur and Nishapoor. It took me another month to reach Teheran, making my way through Mazenderan ; and there I was all right, for I found a British consul, who forwarded me on through Damascas to Smyrna, whence I was brought home in a Mediterranean steamer. There are papers to prove the truth of what I have told you, and all I have to do is to prove that it is to the veritable Hector Macdonald that all these adventures happened. That will be

easy enough. Now perhaps you will tell me of what my father died?"

"Well, my lad, in a letter I have here from Sir Dugald Grant, that worthy puts it down as whisky and bad temper; but if you know Sir Dugald, you know how reckless is his tone sometimes. Apoplexy, I believe, may be assigned as the cause."

Hector left his papers with the lawyer, and next day, in pursuance of his promise to his dying chum, Mick Sullivan, he went down to Canterbury to see the "crature." It is needless to say that the "crature" was all right. By that curious currency of rumour which conveys intelligence of individual military casualties to those connected with the lower ranks of the army faster than any gazette report ever published, she had long since heard of the death of her Mick, and, after the manner of ladies with an eye for

colour, she had seen meet to ally herself to a corporal of the dépôt. There appeared, indeed, to exist some little doubt whether this second matrimonial engagement had not become an accomplished fact some time prior to the possible arrival of any tidings of Mick's death, if not actually before that event. Into the question of dates, however, Hector did not feel called upon to investigate very closely. He was shown a thumping boy, who was a perfect Mick Sullivan in miniature, and thus carried his credentials in his face; and Hector had the pleasure of informing the "crature," his mother, that the quartermaster of the 78th had in his possession a packet, the last legacy of poor Mick, the proceeds of which would place Mick, junior, beyond the reach of want in his callow years of juvenility. So he took a farewell of the "crature," with a promise to

write to the quartermaster with all speed, and betook himself back to London, to have another wrestle with the *vis inertiae* of the War-Office, and to have another interview with Mr. Fraser.

He left the train at London Bridge, and, not being acquainted with the geography of the City, he took the wrong turning at the statue in King William Street. Further and still further he went astray as he paced slowly down Fenchurch Street and the Whitechapel Road, till presently he found himself reaching the confines of the town far out the Bow Road. Then it dawned upon him that he had blundered, and, having made some inquiries which convinced him that he had done so, he stood on the edge of the pavement waiting for the omnibus to come up which he was told would take him westward. As he stood, a pleasure-van hove in sight,



laden with happy children, returning home merrily from a day's holiday in Epping Forest, or some other of the East-end resorts of the recipients of these school treats. As the three wearied knackers shambled past Hector at a limping trot, the machine suddenly gave a lurch, and quietly settled down bow foremost, and slanting to one side at an angle of some forty-five degrees. The fore axle had broken, and a perfect gamut of shrill shrieks issued from the terrified throats of the little occupants. The driver was comfortably deposited on his head among the gravel, but the horses were only too glad to halt; and looking each other sedately in the face, appeared to be congratulating each other upon the felicity of a halt, no matter for what reason. Hector was the first at the tail end of the van, and, opening the door, he proceeded to unpack its contents,

handing them as they "rose" to the willing hands of the crowd, which always on such occasions collects, goodness knows from where. The first that came to hand was a pallid gentleman in black, with a limp white tie, who appeared to be of the genus town missionary. Then there came, in what appeared to be endless succession, girl after girl, of ages ranging from six to thirteen. Where they all came from was matter of intense surprise to Hector long before the last one was got at; but at length the reservoir was exhausted so far as regarded children. The van still, however, had one inmate, a young woman in a sad-coloured dress and a straw bonnet. Her veil was down as she presented herself for extrication in Hector's stalwart arms; yet he thought there was something familiar in the figure and carriage of the head. When he had

placed her on the ground she threw up her veil, and to the amazement—the delighted, yet bewildered surprise of Hector Macdonald, disclosed the features of Mary Home!

It was in a silence caused by the intensity of his wonderment, that Hector conducted Mary Home to the pavement on which the little array of children had already been marshalled by the gentleman in black. He had not known where to begin to make inquiries as to Mary, and here she was to answer for herself, cast up before him by the merest happy chance in the world. He had written to Lady Grant, asking her if she knew anything, but had not received as yet any reply, and he had been pondering over some means of obtaining tidings from India. Well, there was no occasion for any further investigations on this score; and the young

fellow rejoiced with an exceeding great rejoicing, but his natural anxiety to learn particulars was not at once to be gratified. Very pale Mary was as she stepped upon the pavement, and with a little bow and some muttered thanks, turned away to her children. But Hector was not to be denied in this fashion.

“Mary,” he whispered, hoarsely and rapidly, “you are surely not going to turn me adrift in this way, now we have met so strangely. I must have speech of you, and you surely won’t forbid me.”

“You must go now, Mr. Macdonald,” stammered the trembling girl. “I am female teacher in the national school in — Street, Clerkenwell, and if you call there this evening I will be glad to see you. I must look after my little ones now. Good day.”

So Mary turned and brought up the rear of the little procession, which the worthy missionary headed, and Hector followed afar off, without a thought of the War-Office or of Mr. Fraser. He was punctual in the evening, and Mary received him in the matron's little parlour of the schoolroom. Her story was a simple one enough. Ramadheen had kept her in safety till Sir Colin Campbell had brought the Lucknow ladies safe into Cawnpore, and then took her into that town. She had quietly told as much of her history to one of these ladies as sufficed to excite deep interest, but Mary was very anxious that she should not be called upon to narrate publicly the incidents which even to think of caused her agitation so deep. No formal revelation, therefore, was ever made of the fact that she was a survivor of the hapless Cawnpore garrison, and Mary Home

reached England in the companionship of the kind lady who had befriended her and kept her secret. An inexplicable repulsion against communicating with any friends in Scotland had taken possession of her in her forlorn condition, and she had thankfully accepted the situation in which Hector now found her.

That young gentleman was not disposed, if he could help it, to leave her there; but there was a double difficulty. He had first to make himself sure of Mary's inclination, and then to circumvent her pride; and he determined to walk very warily, and, indeed, to indulge in a pious fraud. He resolved, if possible, to marry Mary Home under false pretences.

Mr. Fraser and the sapient gentlemen of the War-Office became amenable to the convincing testimony of facts simultaneous-

ly. Sir Dugald Grant came up to London, and by identifying Hector removed Mr. Fraser's last scruple, while his influence procured at once Hector's recognition at the War-Office and his release from further obligations to the service. Then Sir Dugald went home again, without seeing Mary Home, and chuckling solemnly over Hector's plot. For by this time the difficulties seemed in a fair way of being conquered. Mary Home had promised Hector that she would marry him, that gay deceiver having assured her that he had obtained a commission on account of his Indian services, and pictured forth to her a humble but happy life as the wife of a modest subaltern. The quiet wedding took place at a little church in the Curtain Road, and the happy pair started by the night mail for the dépôt of Hector's mythical regiment. The journey

was a long one, and before it was over Mary began to imagine that she recognised from the window of the post-chaise, for which they had exchanged the railway-carriage, some familiar features in the scenery. But the shades of night fell before certainty had taken the place of guess-work, and that roguish Hector was persistent in his mysteriousness. At length the carriage stopped in front of a mansion-house, from the windows of which the lights blazed cheerily. The door flew open as if spontaneously, and to Mary's astonished gaze were revealed against the ruddy light the gaunt figure of Sir Dugald Grant and the portly dumpiness of his honest lady. They were standing on the threshold of the old House of the Macdonalds, the house the dust of which Hector had shaken from his feet three years ago, for the sake of her whom he now



bore home to it as his bride. And it is not on record that after all Mary resented very deeply or lastingly the deception which Hector had practised upon her. Anyhow, she makes a very charming and contented Lady of Macdonald; and by this time there are several young Macdonalds, whose great reward for exemplary conduct is to have a story about the Indian Mutiny told them by papa and mamma. And across the valley in the little churchyard of Glenfiloch the lowly tombstone in the minister's corner bears upon it the name of the God-fearing minister, who perished far away from its still seclusion.

THE END.









